THE

# BRITISH DRAMA.

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# BRITISH DRAMA;

COMPREHENDING

*THE BEST PLAYS*

IN

THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

*COMEDIES.*

VOL. II.—PART II.

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THE

# BRITISH DRAMA.

## THE BUSY BODY.

BY

*MRS CENTLIVRE.*

### DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

| MEN. | WOMEN. |
|---|---|
| SIR GEORGE AIRY, *a gentleman of four thousand a-year, in love with* MIRANDA. | MIRANDA, *an heiress, worth thirty thousand pounds, really in love with* SIR GEORGE, *but pretends to be so with her guardian,* SIR FRANCIS. |
| SIR FRANCIS GRIPE, *guardian to* MIRANDA *and* MARPLOT, *father to* CHARLES, *in love with* MIRANDA. | ISABINDA, *daughter to* SIR JEALOUS, *in love with* CHARLES, *but designed for a Spanish merchant by her father.* |
| CHARLES, *friend to* SIR GEORGE, *in love with* ISABINDA. | PATCH, *her woman.* |
| SIR JEALOUS TRAFFICK, *a merchant that had lived some time in Spain, father to* ISABINDA. | SCENTWELL, *woman to* MIRANDA. |
| MARPLOT, *a sort of silly fellow, cowardly, but very inquisitive to know every body's business.* | |
| WHISPER, *servant to* CHARLES. | |

*Scene— London.*

### ACT I.

#### SCENE I.—*The Park.*

SIR GEORGE AIRY *meeting* CHARLES.

*Cha.* Ha! Sir George Airy a birding thus early! what forbidden game roused you so soon? for no lawful occasion could invite a person of your figure abroad, at such unfashionable hours.

*Sir Geo.* There are some men, Charles, whom fortune has left free from inquietudes, who are diligently studious to find out ways and means to make themselves uneasy.

*Cha.* Is it possible that any thing in nature can ruffle the temper of a man whom the four seasons of the year compliment with as many thousand pounds, nay, and a father at rest with his ancestors?

*Sir Geo.* Why, there it is now! a man, that wants money, thinks none can be unhappy that has it; but, my affairs are in such a whimsical posture, that it will require a calculation of my nativity to find if my gold will relieve me or not.

*Cha.* Ha, ha, ha! never consult the stars about that; gold has a power beyond them; gold unlocks the midnight councils; gold outdoes the wind, becalms the ship, or fills her sails; gold is omnipotent below; it makes whole armies fight or fly; it buys even souls; and bribes wretches to betray their country: then, what can thy business be that gold won't serve thee in?

*Sir Geo.* Why, I'm in love.

*Cha.* In love!——Ha, ha, ha, ha! in love!—

11314

Ha, ha, ha, ha! with what, prithee? a cherubin?

*Sir Geo.* No; with a woman.

*Cha.* A woman! good. Ha, ha, ha, ha! and gold not help thee?

*Sir Geo.* But, suppose I'm in love with two—

*Cha.* Ay, if thou'rt in love with two hundred, gold will fetch them, I warrant thee, boy. But who are they? who are they? come!

*Sir Geo.* One is a lady, whose face I never saw; but witty to a miracle; the other, beautiful as Venus——

*Cha.* And a fool—

*Sir Geo.* For aught I know; for I never spoke to her; but you can inform me. I am charmed by the wit of the one, and die for the beauty of the other.

*Cha.* And, pray, which are you in quest of now?

*Sir Geo.* I prefer the sensual pleasure; I'm for her I've seen, who is thy father's ward, Miranda.

*Cha.* Nay, then, I pity you; for the Jew, my father, will no more part with her and thirty thousand pounds, than he would with a guinea to keep me from starving.

*Sir Geo.* Now, you see gold can't do every thing, Charles.

*Cha.* Yes; for 'tis her gold that bars my father's gate against you.

*Sir Geo.* Why, if he be this avaricious wretch, how cam'st thou by such a liberal education?

*Cha.* Not a souse out of his pocket, I assure you: I had an uncle who defrayed that charge; but, for some little wildness of youth, though he made me his heir, left dad my guardian till I came to years of discretion, which, I presume, the old gentleman will never think I am; and now he has got the estate into his clutches, it does me no more good than if it lay in Prester John's dominions.

*Sir Geo.* What! canst thou find no stratagem to redeem it?

*Cha.* I have made many essays to no purpose. Though want, the mistress of invention, still tempts me on, yet still the old fox is too cunning for me.—I am upon my last project, which, if it fails, then, for my last refuge, a brown musquet.

*Sir Geo.* What is't? can I assist thee?

*Cha.* Not yet; when you can, I have confidence enough in you to ask it.

*Sir Geo.* I am always ready. But what does he intend to do with Miranda? is she to be sold in private, or will he put her up by way of auction, at who bids most? if so, egad I'm for him; my gold, as you say, shall be subservient to my pleasure.

*Cha.* To deal ingenuously with you, sir George, I know very little of her or home; for, since my uncle's death, and my return from travel, I have never been well with my father: he thinks my expences too great, and I, his allowance too little; he never sees me, but he quarrels; and, to avoid that, I shun his house as much as possible. The report is, he intends to marry her himself.

*Sir Geo.* Can she consent to it?

*Cha.* Yes, faith! so they say: but, I tell you, I am wholly ignorant of the matter. Miranda and I are like two violent members of a contrary party; I can scarce allow her beauty, though all the world does; nor she me civility for that contempt. I fancy she plays the mother-in-law already; and sets the old gentleman on to do mischief.

*Sir Geo.* Then, I have your free consent to get her?

*Cha.* Ay; and my helping hand, if occasion be.

*Sir Geo.* Poh! yonder's a fool coming this way; let's avoid him.

*Cha.* What? Marplot? No, no; he's my instrument; there's a thousand conveniences in him: he'll lend me his money, when he has any; run of my errands, and be proud of it; in short, he'll pimp for me, lie for me, drink for me, do any thing but fight for me; and that I trust to my own arm for.

*Sir Geo.* Nay, then, he's to be endured; I never knew his qualifications before.

*Enter* MARPLOT, *with a patch across his face.*

*Mar.* Dear Charles, your's—Ha! Sir George Airy! the man in the world I have an ambition to be known to! [*Aside.*] Give me thy hand, dear boy!

*Cha.* A good assurance! But hark ye, how came your beautiful countenance clouded in the wrong place?

*Mar.* I must confess 'tis a little *mal-a-propos;* but no matter for that. A word with you, Charles. Prithee, introduce me to sir George—he is a man of wit, and I'd give ten guineas to——

*Cha.* When you have them, you mean?

*Mar.* Ay, when I have them; pugh, pox, you cut the thread of my discourse——I would give ten guineas, I say, to be ranked in his acquaintance. Well, 'tis a vast addition to a man's fortune, according to the rout of the world, to be seen in the company of leading men; for, then, we are all thought to be politicians, or whigs, or jacks, or highflyers, or lowflyers, or levellers—and so forth; for, you must know, we all herd in parties now.

*Cha.* Then, a fool for diversion is out of fashion, I find?

*Mar.* Yes, without it be a mimicking fool; and they are darlings every where. But, prithee, introduce me.

*Cha.* Well, on condition you'll give us a true account how you came by that mourning nose, I will.

*Mar.* I'll do it.

*Cha.* Sir George, here's a gentleman has a passionate desire to kiss your hand.

*Sir Geo.* Oh, I honour men of the sword! And, I presume, this gentleman is lately come from Spain or Portugal—by his scars.

*Mar.* No, really, sir George, mine sprung from civil fury. Happening last night into the groom porter's—I had a strong inclination to go ten guineas with a sort of a, sort of a—kind of a milksop, as I thought. A pox of the dice! he flung out, and my pockets being empty, as Charles knows they often are, he proved a surly North Briton, and broke my face for my deficiency.

*Sir Geo.* Ha, ha, ha! and did not you draw?

*Mar.* Draw, sir! Why, I did but lay my hand upon my sword, to make a swift retreat, and he roared out—Now the deel a ma saul, sir, gin ye touch yer steel Ise whip mine through yer wem.

*Sir Geo.* Ha, ha, ha!

*Cha.* Ha, ha, ha, ha! Safe was the word. So, you walked off, I suppose.

*Mar.* Yes, for I avoid fighting, purely to be serviceable to my friends, you know———

*Sir Geo.* Your friends are much obliged to you, sir: I hope you'll rank me in that number.

*Mar.* Sir George, a bow from the side-box, or to be seen in your chariot, binds me ever yours.

*Sir Geo.* Trifles; you may command them, when you please.

*Cha.* Provided he may command you.

*Mar.* Me! Why, I live for no other purpose ——Sir George, I have the honour to be caressed by most of the reigning toasts of the town: I'll tell them you are the finest gentleman——

*Sir Geo.* No, no; prithee, let me alone to tell the ladies—my parts—Can you convey a letter upon occasion, or deliver a message with an air of business, ha?

*Mar.* With the assurance of a page, and the gravity of a statesman.

*Sir Geo.* You know Miranda?

*Mar.* What! My sister ward? Why, her guardian is mine; we are fellow-sufferers. Ah, he is a covetous, cheating, sanctified, curmudgeon: that sir Francis Gripe is a damned old—hypocritical———

*Cha.* Hold, hold; I suppose, friend, you forget that he is my father?

*Mar.* Egad, and so I did, Charles—I ask your pardon, Charles, but it is for your sake I hate him. Well, I say the world is mistaken in him; his out-side piety makes him every man's executor, and his inside cunning makes him every heir's gaoler. Egad, Charles, I'm half persuaded that thou'rt some ward, too, and never of his getting—for never were two things so unlike as you and your father; he scrapes up every thing, and thou spendest every thing; every body is indebted to him, and thou art indebted to every body.

*Cha.* You are very free, Mr Marplot.

*Mar.* Aye, I give and take, Charles—you may be as free with me, you know.

*Sir Geo.* A pleasant fellow.

*Cha.* The dog is diverting, sometimes, or there would be no enduring his impertinence. He is pressing to be employed, and willing to execute; but some ill fate generally attends all he undertakes, and he oftener spoils an intrigue than helps it.

*Mar.* I have always your good word; but if I miscarry, 'tis none of my fault; I follow my instructions.

*Cha.* Yes, witness the merchant's wife.

*Mar.* Pish, pox! that was an accident.

*Sir Geo.* What was't, prithee?

*Mar.* Nay, Charles, now, don't expose your friend.

*Cha.* Why, you must know, I had lent a certain merchant my hunting horses, and was to have met his wife in his absence. Sending him along with my groom to make the compliment, and to deliver a letter to the lady at the same time; what does he do, but gives the husband the letter, and offers her the horses!

*Mar.* Why, to be sure, I did offer her the horses, and I remember you was even with me, for you denied the letter to be yours, and swore I had a design upon her, which my bones paid for.

*Cha.* Come, sir George, let's walk round, if you are not engaged, for I have sent my man upon a little earnest business, and I have ordered him to bring me the answer into the Park.

*Mar.* Business! and I not know it! Egad I'll watch him.

*Sir Geo.* I must beg your pardon, Charles; I am to meet your father.

*Cha.* My father!

*Sir Geo.* Aye, and about the oddest bargain, perhaps, you ever heard of; but I'll not impart till I know the success.

*Mar.* What can his business be with Sir Francis? Now would I give all the world to know it! Why the devil should not one know every man's concerns? [*Aside.*

*Cha.* Prosperity to it, whatever it be: I have private affairs, too: over a bottle, we'll compare notes.

*Mar.* Charles knows I love a glass as well as any man; I'll make one; shall it be to-night? And I long to know their secrets. [*Aside.*

*Enter* WHISPER.

*Whis.* Sir, sir, Mrs Patch says Isabinda's Spanish father has quite spoiled the plot, and she cannot meet you in the Park, but he infallibly will go out this afternoon, she says: but I must step again to know the hour.

*Mar.* What did Whisper say now? I shall go stark mad, if I'm not let into the secret. [*Aside.*

*Cha.* Curst misfortune!

*Mar.* Curst! What's curst, Charles?

*Cha.* Come along with me; my heart feels pleasure at her name. Sir George, your's; we'll meet at the old place the usual hour.

*Sir Geo.* Agreed. I think I see sir Francis yonder. [*Exit* SIR GEORGE.

*Cha.* Marplot, you must excuse me, I am engaged. [*Exit* CHARLES.

*Mar.* Engaged! Egad, I'll engage my life I'll know what your engagement is.

[*Exit* MARPLOT.

*Enter* MIRANDA, *coming out of a chair.*

*Mir.* Let the chair wait. My servant that dogged sir George said he was in the Park.

*Enter* PATCH.

Ha! Miss Patch alone! Did not you tell me you had contrived a way to bring Isabinda to the Park?

*Patch.* Oh, madam, your ladyship cannot imagine what a wretched disappointment we have met with! Just as I had fetched a suit of my clothes for a disguise, comes my old master into his closet, which is right against her chamber door: this struck us into a terrible fright—At length I put on a grave face, and asked him if he was at leisure for his chocolate? in hopes to draw him out of his hole; but he snapped my nose off: no, I shall be busy here, these two hours. At which my poor mistress, seeing no way of escape, ordered me to wait on your ladyship with the sad relation.

*Mir.* Unhappy Isabinda! Was ever any thing so unaccountable as the humour of Sir Jealous Traffick?

*Patch.* Oh, madam, it's his living so long in Spain. He vows he'll spend half his estate, but he'll be a parliament-man, on purpose to bring in a bill for women to wear veils, and other odious Spanish customs—he swears it is the height of impudence to have a woman seen barefaced, even at church, and scarce believes there's a true begotten child in the city.

*Mir.* Ha, ha, ha! how the old fool torments himself! Suppose he could introduce his rigid rules—does he think we could not match them in contrivance? No, no; let the tyrant man make what laws he will, if there's a woman under the government, I warrant she finds a way to break them. Is his mind set upon the Spaniard for his son-in-law still?

*Patch.* Aye, and he expects him by the next fleet, which drives his daughter to melancholy and despair. But, madam, I find you retain the same gay cheerful spirit you had when I waited on your ladyship. My lady is mighty good-humoured, too; and I have found a way to make sir Jealous believe I am wholly in his interest, when my real design is to serve her; he makes me her gaoler, and I set her at liberty.

*Mir.* I knew thy prolific brain would be of singular service to her, or I had not parted with thee to her father.

*Patch.* But, madam, the report is that you are going to marry your guardian!

*Mir.* It is necessary such a report should be, Patch.

*Patch.* But is it true, madam?

*Mir.* That's not absolutely necessary.

*Patch.* I thought it was only the old strain, coaxing him still for your own, and railing at all the young fellows about town: in my mind, now, you are as ill plagued with your guardian, madam, as my lady is with her father.

*Mir.* No, I have liberty, wench; that she wants: what would she give now to be in this deshabille in the open air, nay more, in pursuit of the young fellow she likes? for that's my case, I assure you.

*Patch.* As for that, madam, she's even with you; for, though she can't come abroad, we have a way to bring him home in spite of old Argus.

*Mir.* Now, Patch, your opinion of my choice, for here he comes. Ha! my guardian with him! what can be the meaning of this? I'm sure sir Francis can't know me in this dress. Let me observe them. [*They withdraw.*

*Enter* SIR FRANCIS GRIPE *and* SIR GEORGE AIRY.

*Sir Fran.* Verily, sir George, thou wilt repent throwing away thy money so; for I tell thee sincerely, Miranda, my charge, does not like a young fellow; they are all vicious, and seldom make good husbands: in sober sadness, she can't abide them.

*Mir.* [*Peeping.*] In sober sadness, you are mistaken—What can this mean?

*Sir Geo.* Look'e, sir Francis; whether she can or cannot abide young fellows, is not the business: will you take the fifty guineas?

*Sir Fran.* In good truth I will not—for I knew thy father; he was a hearty wary man; and I cannot consent that his son should squander away what he saved to no purpose.

*Mir.* [*Peeping.*] Now, in the name of wonder, what bargain can he be driving about me for fifty guineas?

*Patch.* I wish it be not for the first night's lodging, madam.

*Sir Geo.* Well, sir Francis, since you are so conscientious for my father's sake, then permit me the favour gratis.

*Mir.* [*Peeping.*] The favour! O' my life I believe 'tis as you said, Patch!

*Sir Fran.* No verily; if thou dost not buy thy experience thou wilt never be wise; therefore, give me a hundred, and try thy fortune.

*Sir Geo.* The scruples arose, I find, from the scanty sum.—Let me see—a hundred guineas—[*Takes them out of a purse, and chinks them.*] Ha! they have a very pretty sound, and a very pleasing look—But then, Miranda——but if she should be cruel————

*Mir.* [*Peeping.*] As ten to one I shall——

*Sir Fran.* Ay, do; consider on't. He, he, he!

*Sir Geo.* No, I'll do't.

*Patch.* Do't! what, whether you will or no, madam?

*Sir Geo.* Come, to the point; here's the gold; sum up the conditions——

[SIR FRAN. *pulling out a paper.*]

*Mir.* [*Peeping.*] Ay, for Heaven's sake do, for my expectation is on the rack!

*Sir Fran.* Well, at your peril be it.

*Sir Geo.* Ay, ay; go on.

*Sir Fran. Imprimis,* you are to be admitted into my house in order to move your suit to Miranda, for the space of ten minutes, without let or molestation, provided I remain in the same room.

*Sir Geo.* But out of earshot.

*Sir Fran.* Well, well, I don't desire to hear what you say; ha, ha, ha! in consideration I am to have that purse and a hundred guineas.

*Sir Geo.* Take it—— [*Gives him the purse.*

*Mir.* [*Peeping.*] So! 'tis well it's no worse: I'll fit you both——

*Sir Geo.* And this agreement is to be performed to-day.

*Sir Fran.* Ay, ay; the sooner the better. Poor fool! how Miranda and I shall laugh at him!—Well, sir George, ha, ha, ha! take the last sound of your guineas, ha, ha, ha! [*Chinks them.*] [*Exit.*

*Mir.* [*Peeping.*] Sure he does not know I am Miranda.

*Sir Geo.* A very extraordinary bargain I have made truly, if she should be really in love with this old cuff now!——Psha! that's morally impossible.——But then, what hopes have I to succeed? I never spoke to her—

*Mir.* [*Peeping.*] Say you so? then I am safe.

*Sir Geo.* What though my tongue never spoke? my eyes said a thousand things, and my hopes flattered me her's answered them. If I'm lucky ——If not, it is but a hundred guineas thrown away. [MIRANDA *and* PATCH *come forward.*

*Mir.* Upon what, sir George?

*Sir Geo.* Ha! my incognita—upon a woman, madam.

*Mir.* They are the worst things you can deal in, and damage the soonest; your very breath destroys them, and, I fear, you'll never see your return, sir George, ha, ha, ha!

*Sir Geo.* Were they more brittle than china, and dropped to pieces with a touch, every atom of her I have ventured at, if she is but mistress of thy wit, balances ten times the sum. Prithee, let me see thy face!

*Mir.* By no means; that may spoil your opinion of my sense——

*Sir Geo.* Rather confirm it, madam.

*Patch.* So, rob the lady of your gallantry, sir.

*Sir Geo.* No, child; a dish of chocolate in the morning never spoils my dinner: the other lady I design a set meal; so there's no danger.

*Mir.* Matrimony! Ha, ha, ha! What crimes have you committed against the god of love, that he should revenge them so severely, to stamp husband on your forehead?

*Sir Geo.* For my folly, in having so often met you here, without pursuing the laws of nature, and exercising her command——But I resolve, ere we part now, to know who you are, where you live, what kind of flesh and blood your face is; therefore, unmask, and don't put me to the trouble of doing it for you.

*Mir.* My face is the same flesh and blood with my hand, sir George, which, if you'll be so rude to provoke——

*Sir Geo.* You'll apply it to my cheek—the ladies' favours are always welcome, but I must have that cloud withdrawn.—[*Taking hold of her.*]—Remember you are in the Park, child; and what a terrible thing would it be to lose this pretty white hand!

*Mir.* And how will it sound in a chocolate-house, that sir George Airy rudely pulled off a lady's mask, when he had given her his honour that he never would, directly or indirectly, endeavour to know her till she gave him leave?

*Patch.* I wish we were safe out.

*Sir Geo.* But, if that lady thinks fit to pursue, and meet me at every turn, like some troubled spirit, shall I be blamed if I inquire into the reality? I would have nothing dissatisfied in a female shape.

*Mir.* What shall I do? [*Pauses.*

*Sir Geo.* Aye, prithee, consider; for thou shalt find me very much at thy service.

*Patch.* Suppose, sir, the lady should be in love with you?

*Sir Geo.* Oh! I'll return the obligation in a moment.

*Patch.* And marry her?

*Sir Geo.* Ha, ha, ha! that's not the way to love her, child.

*Mir.* If he discovers me I shall die—Which way shall I escape? Let me see— [*Pauses.*

*Sir Geo.* Well, madam——

*Mir.* I have it—Sir George, 'tis fit you should allow something; if you'll excuse my face, and turn your back, (if you look upon me I shall sink, even masked as I am) I will confess why I have engaged you so often, who I am, and where I live.

*Sir Geo.* Well, to shew you I'm a man of honour, I accept the conditions: let me but once know those, and the face won't be long a secret to me.

*Patch.* What mean you, madam?

*Mir.* To get off.

*Sir Geo.* 'Tis something indecent to turn one's back upon a lady; but you command, and I obey. [*Turns his back.*] Come, madam, begin—

*Mir.* First, then, it was my unhappy lot to see you at Paris [*Draws back a little way, and speaks.*], at a ball upon a birthday; your shape

and air charmed my eyes, your wit and complaisance my soul, and from that fatal night I loved you. [*Drawing back.*

And when you left the place grief seized me so,
Nor rest my heart nor sleep my eyes could know,
Last I resolved a hazardous point to try,
And quit the place in search of liberty. [*Exit.*

*Sir Geo.* Excellent!—I hope she's handsome—Well, now madam, to the two other things, your name, and where you live——I am a gentleman, and this confession will not be lost upon me—Nay, prithee, don't weep, but go on, for I find my heart melts in thy behalf—Speak quickly, or I shall turn about——Not yet—Poor lady! she expects I should comfort her; and, to do her justice, she has said enough to encourage me. [*Turns about.*] Ha! gone! the devil! jilted! Why, what a tale has she invented—of Paris, balls, and birth-days! Egad I'd give ten guineas to know who the gipsey is—A curse of my folly—I deserve to lose her. What woman can forgive a man that turns his back!

The bold and resolute in love and war
To conquer take the right and swiftest way;
The boldest lover soonest gains the fair,
As courage makes the rudest force obey:
Take no denial, and the dames adore ye;
Closely pursue them, and they fall before ye.
[*Exit.*

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.

*Enter* SIR FRANCIS GRIPE *and* MIRANDA.

*Sir Fran.* HA, ha, ha, ha!

*Mir.* Ha, ha, ha, ha, ha, ha! Oh, I shall die with laughing—the most romantic adventure—Ha, ha, ha! What does the odious young fop mean? A hundred pieces to talk ten minutes with me! ha, ha, ha, ha!

*Sir Fran.* And I am to be by too; there's the jest! adad, if it had been in private, I should not have cared to trust the young dog.

*Mir.* Indeed and indeed but you might, Gardy—Now, methinks, there's nobody handsomer than you: so neat, so clean, so good-humoured, and so loving—

*Sir Fran.* Pretty rogue, pretty rogue! and so thou shalt find me, if thou dost prefer thy Gardy before these caperers of the age: thou shalt outshine the queen's box on an opera night; thou shalt be the envy of the ring, (for I will carry thee to Hyde-Park) and thy equipage shall surpass the——what d'ye call them, ambassadors.

*Mir.* Nay, I am sure the discreet part of my sex will envy me more for the inside furniture, when you are in it, than my outside equipage.

*Sir Fran.* A cunning baggage i'faith thou art, and a wise one too! and, to shew thee that thou hast not chose amiss, I'll this moment disinherit my son, and settle my whole estate upon thee.

*Mir.* There's an old rogue now! [*Aside.*] No, Gardy, I would not have your name be so black in the world. You know my father's will runs, that I am not to possess my estate, without your consent, till I am five-and-twenty; you shall only abate the odd seven years, and make me mistress of my estate to-day, and I'll make you master of my person to-morrow.

*Sir Fran,* Humph! that may not be safe——No, Chargy, I'll settle it upon thee for pin-money, and that will be every bit as well, thou know'st.

*Mir.* Unconscionable old wretch! bribe me with my own money! Which way shall I get out of his hands. [*Aside.*

*Sir Fran.* Well, what art thou thinking, my girl, ha? how to banter sir George!

*Mir.* I must not pretend to banter: he knows my tongue too well. [*Aside.*] No, Gardy, I have thought of a way will confound him more than all I could say, if I should talk to him seven years.

*Sir Fran.* How's that? oh! I'm transported, I'm ravished, I'm mad!——

*Mir.* It would make you mad if you knew all: [*Aside.*] I'll not answer him a word, but be dumb to all he says.

*Sir Fran.* Dumb! good; ha, ha, ha! Excellent! ha, ha, ha, ha! I think I have you now, Sir George. Dumb! he'll go distracted—well, she's the wittiest rogue. Ha, ha, dumb! I can't but laugh, ha, ha! to think how damned mad he'll be when he finds he has given his money away for a dumb show; ha, ha, ha!

*Mir.* Nay, Gardy, if he did but know my thoughts of him, it would make him ten times madder; ha, ha, ha, ha!

*Sir Fran.* Ay, so it would, Chargy, to hold him in such derision, to scorn to answer him, to be dumb! ha, ha, ha!

*Enter* CHARLES.

*Sir Fran.* How now, sirrah! who let you in?

*Cha.* My necessities, sir.

*Sir Fran.* Your necessities are very impertinent, and ought to have sent before they entered.

*Cha.* Sir, I knew 'twas a word would gain admittance nowhere.

*Sir Fran.* Then, sirrah, how durst you rudely thrust that upon your father, which nobody else would admit?

*Cha.* Sure the name of a son is a sufficient plea. I ask this lady's pardon if I have intruded.

*Sir Fran.* Ay, ay; ask her pardon and her blessing, too, if you expect any thing from me.

*Mir.* I believe yours, Sir Francis, in a purse of guineas, would be more material. Your son may have business with you; I'll retire.

*Sir Fran.* I guess his business; but I'll dispatch him; I expect the knight every minute: you'll be in readiness?

*Mir.* Certainly: my expectation is more upon the wing than yours, old gentleman. [*Aside. Exit.*

*Sir Fran.* Well, sir?

*Cha.* Nay, it is very ill, sir; my circumstances are, I'm sure.

*Sir Fran.* And what's that to me, sir? your management should have made them better.

*Cha.* If you please to entrust me with the management of my estate, I shall endeavour it, sir.

*Sir Fran.* What, to set upon a card, and buy a lady's favour at the price of a thousand pieces; to rig out an equipage for a wench, or, by your carelessness, to enrich your steward; to fine for sheriff, or put up for a parliament-man?

*Cha.* I hope I should not spend it this way: however, I ask only for what my uncle left me; yours you may dispose of as you please, sir.

*Sir Fran.* That I shall, out of your reach, I assure you, sir. Adad, these young fellows think old men get estates for nothing but them to squander away in dicing, wenching, drinking, dressing, and so forth!

*Cha.* I think I was born a gentleman, sir; I'm sure my uncle bred me like one.

*Sir Fran.* From which you would infer, sir, that gaming, whoring, and the pox, are requisites for a gentleman.

*Cha.* Monstrous! when I would ask him only for a support, he falls into these unmannerly reproaches. I must, though against my will, employ invention, and, by stratagem, relieve myself. [*Aside.*

*Sir Fran.* Sirrah, what is it you mutter, sirrah? ha! [*Holds up his cane.*] I say you sha'nt have a groat out of my hands, till I please——and may be I'll never please; and what's that to you?

*Cha.* Nay, to be robbed, or have one's throat cut, is not much——

*Sir Fran.* What's that, sirrah? would you rob me, or cut my throat, ye rogue?

*Cha.* Heaven forbid, sir!—I said no such thing.

*Sir Fran.* Mercy on me! what a plague it is to have a son of one-and-twenty, who wants to elbow one out of one's life to edge himself into the estate!

*Enter* MARPLOT.

*Mar.* Egad, he's here!—I was afraid I had lost him: his secret could not be with his father; his wants are public there.—Guardian, your servant—O Charles, are you there? I know, by that sorrowful countenance of thine, the old gentleman's fist is as close as his strong box——But I'll help thee. [*Apart.*

*Sir Fran.* So! here's another extravagant coxcomb, that will spend his fortune before he comes to't; but he shall pay swinging interest, and so let the fool go on.—Well, what, does necessity bring you too, sir?

*Mar.* You have hit it, guardian——I want a hundred pounds.

*Sir Fran.* For what?

*Mar.* Pogh! for a hundred things—I can't, for my life, tell you for what.

*Cha.* Sir, I suppose I have received all the answer I am like to have.

*Mar.* Oh, the devil! if he gets out before me, I shall lose him again.

*Sir Fran.* Ay, sir; and you may be marching as soon as you please—I must see a change in your temper, ere you find one in mine.

*Mar.* Pray, sir, dispatch me; the money, sir; I'm in mighty haste.

*Sir Fran.* Fool, take this, and go to the cashier. I sha'nt be long plagued with thee.

[*Gives him a note.*

*Mar.* Devil take the cashier! I shall certainly have Charles gone before I come back.

[*Runs out.*

*Cha.* Well, sir, I take my leave—but remember, you expose an only son to all the miseries of wretched poverty, which too often lays the plan for scenes of mischief.

*Sir Fran.* Stay, Charles; I have a sudden thought come into my head, may prove to thy advantage.

*Cha.* Ha! does he relent?

*Sir Fran.* My Lady Wrinkle, worth forty thousand pounds, sets up for a handsome young husband; she praised thee t'other day; though the matchmakers can get twenty guineas for a sight of her, I can introduce thee for nothing.

*Cha.* My lady Wrinkle, sir! why, she has but one eye.

*Sir Fran.* Then she'll see but half your extravagance, sir.

*Cha.* Condemn me to such a piece of deformity! a toothless, dirty, wry-necked, hunch-backed hag!

*Sir Fran.* Hunch-backed! so much the better; then she has a rest for her misfortunes, for thou wilt load her swingingly. Now, I warrant, you think this is no offer of a father! forty thousand pounds is nothing with you!

*Cha.* Yes, sir, I think it is too much; a young, beautiful woman, with half the money, would be more agreeable.—I thank you, sir; but you chuse better for yourself, I find.

*Sir Fran.* Out of my doors, you dog! you pretend to meddle with my marriage, sirrah!

*Cha.* Sir, I obey: but—

*Sir Fran.* But me no buts—Begone, sir! dare to ask me for money again——refuse forty thousand pounds! Out of my doors, I say, without reply!

[*Exit* CHA.

*Enter* MARPLOT, *running.*

*Mar.* Ha! gone! is Charles gone, Gardy?

*Sir Fran.* Yes, and I desire your wise worship to walk after him.

*Mar.* Nay, egad I shall run; I tell you that. A pox of the cashier for detaining me so long! Where the devil shall I find him now? I shall certainly lose this secret, and I had rather by half lose my money——Where shall I find him now?——D'ye know where Charles is gone, Gardy?

*Sir Fran.* Gone to the devil, and you may go after him.

*Mar.* Ay, that I will, as fast as I can. [*Going, returns.*] Have you any commands there, Gardy? [*Exit.*

*Sir Fran.* What, is the fellow distracted?

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Sir George Airy inquires for you, sir.

*Sir Fran.* Desire sir George to walk up.——Now for a trial of skill, that will make me happy, and him a fool. Ha, ha, ha! In my mind, he looks like an ass already.

*Enter* SIR GEORGE.

Well, sir George, do you hold in the same mind, or would you capitulate? ha, ha, ha! Look, here are the guineas; [*Chinks them.*] ha, ha, ha!

*Sir Geo.* Not if they were twice the sum, sir Francis; therefore be brief, call in the lady, and take your post.

*Sir Fran.* Agreed. Miranda! [*Exit.*

*Sir Geo.* If she's a woman, and not seduced by witchcraft to this old rogue, I'll make his heart ache; for if she has but one grain of inclination about her, I'll vary a thousand shapes but find it.

*Enter* MIRANDA *and* SIR FRANCIS.

*Sir Fran.* There, sir George; try your fortune. [*Takes out his watch.*

*Sir Geo.* So from the eastern chambers breaks the sun, dispels the clouds, and gilds the vales below. [*Salutes her.*

*Sir Fran.* Hold, sir; kissing was not in our agreement.

*Sir Geo.* Oh! that's by way of prologue. Pr'ythee, old Mammon, to thy post.

*Sir Fran.* Well, young Timon, 'tis now four exactly; ten minutes, remember, is your utmost limit; not a minute more.

[*Retires to the bottom of the stage.*

*Sir Geo.* Madam, whether you'll excuse or blame my love, the author of this rash proceeding depends upon your pleasure, as also the life of your admirer: your sparkling eyes speak a heart susceptible of love; your vivacity a soul too delicate to admit the embraces of decayed mortality.

*Mir.* [*Aside.*] Oh! that I durst speak——

*Sir Geo.* Shake off this tyrant guardian's yoke; assume yourself, and dash his bold aspiring hopes. The deity of his desires is avarice; a heretick in love, and ought to be banished by the queen of beauty. See, madam, a faithful servant kneels, and begs to be admitted in the number of your slaves.

[MIRANDA *gives him her hand to raise him.*

*Sir Fran.* I wish I could hear what he says now. [*Running up.*] Hold, hold, hold! no palming; that's contrary to articles——

*Sir Geo.* 'Sdeath, sir, keep your distance, or I'll write another article in your guts!

[*Lays his hand to his sword.*

*Sir Fran.* [*Going back.*] A bloody-minded fellow!

*Sir Geo.* Not answer me! perhaps she thinks my address too grave: I'll be more free—Can you be so unconscionable, madam, to let me say all these fine things to you without one single compliment in return? View me well; am I not a proper handsome fellow, ha? can you prefer that old, dry, withered, sapless log, of sixty-five, to the vigorous, gay, sprightly love of twenty-four? With snoring only he'll awake thee; but I, with ravishing delight, would make thy senses dance in concert with the joyful minutes—Ha! not yet? Sure she's dumb!—Thus would I steal and touch thy beauteous hand, [*Takes hold of her hand.*] till, by degrees, I reach'd thy snowy breasts, then ravish kisses thus.

[*Embraces her with ecstacy.*

*Mir.* [*Struggles, and flings from him.*] Oh, heavens! I shall not be able to contain myself. [*Aside.*

*Sir Fran.* [*Running up with his watch in his hand.*] Sure she did not speak to him——There's five of the ten minutes gone, sir George—Adad, I don't like those close conferences——

*Sir Geo.* More interruptions!—you will have it, sir! [*Lays his hand to his sword.*

*Sir Fran.* [*Going back.*] No, no; you shan't have her neither. [*Aside.*

*Sir Geo.* Dumb still!—sure this old dog has enjoined her silence. I'll try another way—I must conclude, madam, that, in compliance to your guardian's humour you refuse to answer me. Consider the injustice of his injunction.—Madam, these few minutes cost me a hundred pounds—and would you answer me, I could purchase the whole day so. However, madam, you must give me leave to make the best interpretation I can for my money, and take the indication of your silence for the secret liking of my person; therefore, madam, I will instruct you how to keep your word inviolate to sir Francis, and yet answer me to every question: as, for example, when I ask any thing to which you would reply in the affirmative, gently nod your head—thus, [*Nods.*] and when in the negative, thus, [*Shakes his head.*] and in the doubtful, a tender sigh, thus, [*Sighs.*]

*Mir.* How every action charms me—but I'll fit him for signs, I warrant him. [*Aside.*

*Sir Fran.* Ha, ha, ha! poor sir George! ha, ha, ha! [*Aside.*

*Sir Geo.* Was it by his desire that you are dumb, madam, to all I can say? [MIRANDA *nods.*] Very well! she's tractable, I find—And is it possible that you can love him? [MIRANDA *nods.*] Miraculous! Pardon the bluntness of my questions; for my time is short. May I not hope to supplant him in your esteem? [MIRANDA *sighs.*] Good! she answers me as I could wish. —You'll not consent to marry him, then? [MIRANDA *sighs.*] How! doubtful in that?—Undone again—Humph! but that may proceed from his power to keep her out of her estate till twenty-five: I'll try that—Come, madam, I cannot think you hesitate in this affair out of any motive but your fortune—let him keep it till those few years are expired; make me happy with your person, let him enjoy your wealth.—[MIRANDA *holds up her hands.*] Why, what sign is that now? Nay, nay, madam, except you observe my lesson, I can't understand your meaning.

*Sir Fran.* What a vengeance! are they talking by signs? 'ad I may be fooled here. What do you mean, sir George?

*Sir Geo.* To cut your throat, if you dare mutter another syllable.

*Sir Fran.* 'Od I wish he were fairly out of my house!

*Sir Geo.* Pray, madam, will you answer me to the purpose? [MIRANDA *shakes her head, and points to* SIR FRANCIS.] What does she mean? she won't answer me to the purpose; or is she afraid yon old cuff should understand her signs?——ay, it must be that. I perceive, madam, you are too apprehensive of the promise you have made to follow my rules; therefore, I'll suppose your mind, and answer for you.—First for myself, madam. That I am in love with you, is an infallible truth. Now for you. [*Turns on her side.*] Indeed, sir! and may I believe it?——As certainly, madam, as that 'tis daylight, or that I die, if you persist in silence.—Bless me with the music of your voice, and raise my spirits to their proper heaven. Thus low let me intreat, ere I'm obliged to quit this place; grant me some token of a favourable reception to keep my hopes alive. [*Arises hastily, turns on her side.*] Rise, sir; and since my guardian's presence will not allow me privilege of tongue, read that, and rest assured you are not indifferent to me. [*Offers her a letter, she strikes it down.*] Ha, right woman! but no matter; I'll go on.

*Sir Fran.* Ha! what's that? a letter!——Ha, ha, ha! thou art baulked.

*Mir.* The best assurance I ever saw—— [*Aside.*

*Sir Geo.* Ha! a letter! oh! let me kiss it with the same raptures that I would do the dear hand that touched it. [*Opens it.*] Now for a quick fancy, and a long extempore——What's here? [*Reads.*] 'Dear sir George! this virgin muse I 'consecrate to you; which, when it has received 'the addition of your voice, 'twill charm me into 'a desire of liberty to love, which you, and only 'you, can fix.' My angel! oh, you transport me! [*Kisses the letter.*] And see the power of your command! the god of love has set the verse already, the flowing numbers dance into a tune, and I'm inspired with a voice to sing it.

*Mir.* I'm sure thou'rt inspired with impudence enough. [*Aside.*

Sir Geo. *Great love inspire him,*
*Say I admire him.*
*Give me the lover,*
*That can discover*
*Secret devotion*
*From silent motion;*
*Then don't betray me,*
*But hence convey me.*

[SIR GEO. *taking hold of* MIRAN.] With all my heart; this moment let's retire.

[SIR FRAN. *coming up hastily.*

*Sir Fran.* The time is expired, sir, and you must take your leave. There, my girl, there's the hundred pounds which thou hast won. Go, I'll be with you presently. Ha, ha, ha, ha! [*Exit* MIRAN.

*Sir Geo.* Adsheart, madam! you won't leave me just in the nick, will you?

*Sir Fran.* Ha, ha, ha! she has nicked you, sir George, I think; ha, ha, ha! Have you any more hundred pounds to throw away upon courtship? ha, ha, ha!

*Sir Geo.* He, he, he, he! A curse of your fleering jests!—Yet, however ill I succeed, I'll venture the same wager she does not value thee a spoonful of snuff—nay, more, though you enjoined her silence to me, you'll never make her speak to the purpose with yourself.

*Sir Fran.* Ha, ha, ha! Did I not tell thee thou wouldst repent thy money? Did I not say she hated young fellows? ha, ha, ha!

*Sir Geo.* And I'm positive she's not in love with age.

*Sir Fran.* Ha, ha, ha! no matter for that, ha, ha! She's not taken with your youth, nor your rhetoric to boot; ha, ha!

*Sir Geo.* Whate'er her reasons are for disliking of me, I am certain she can be taken with nothing about thee.

*Sir Fran.* Ha, ha, ha! how he swells with envy—Poor man! poor man!—ha, ha, ha! I must beg your pardon, sir George; Miranda will be impatient to have her share of mirth. Verily, we shall laugh at thee most egregiously; ha, ha, ha!

*Sir Geo.* With all my heart, faith!——I shall laugh in my turn, too!—for, if you dare marry her, old Belzebub, you will be cuckolded most egregiously: remember that, and tremble———

She that to age her beauteous self resigns,
Shews witty management for close designs;

Then, if thou'rt graced with fair Miranda's bed,
Actæon's horns, she means, shall crown thy head. [*Exit* SIR GEO.

*Sir Fran.* Ha, ha, ha! he is mad!
These fluttering fops imagine they can wind,
Turn and decoy to love all womankind;
But here's a proof of wisdom in my charge,
Old men are constant, young men live at large.
The frugal hand can bills at sight defray,
When he that lavish is has naught to pay.
[*Exit* SIR FRAN.

SCENE II.—*Changes to* SIR JEALOUS TRAFFICK'S *house.*

*Enter* SIR JEALOUS, ISABINDA, *and* PATCH *following.*

*Sir Jeal.* What, in the balcony again, notwithstanding my positive commands to the contrary?—Why don't you write a bill on your forehead to shew passengers there's something to be let?——

*Isa.* What harm can there be in a little fresh air, sir?

*Sir Jeal.* Is your constitution so hot, mistress, that it wants cooling, ha? Apply the virtuous Spanish rules; banish your taste and thoughts of flesh; feed upon roots, and quench your thirst with water.

*Isa.* That and a close room would certainly make me die of the vapours.

*Sir Jeal.* No, mistress; 'tis your high-fed, lusty, rambling, rampant ladies—that are troubled with the vapours: 'tis your ratafia, persico, cinnamon, citron, and spirit of clara, cause such swimming in the brain, that carries many a guinea full tide to the doctor: but you are not to be bred this way: no galloping abroad, no receiving visits at home; for in our loose country the women are as dangerous as the men.

*Patch.* So I told her, sir, and that it was not decent to be seen in a balcony—but she threatened to slap my chops, and told me I was her servant, not her governess.

*Sir Jeal.* Did she so? but I'll make her to know that you are her duenna. O that incomparable custom of Spain! Why, here's no depending upon old women in my country—for they are as wanton at eighty, as a girl of eighteen; and a man may as safely trust to Asgil's translation, as to his great grandmother's not marrying again.

*Isa.* Or to the Spanish ladies' veils and duennas for the safeguard of their honour.

*Sir Jeal.* Dare to ridicule the cautious conduct of that wise nation, and I'll have you locked up this fortnight, without a peep-hole.

*Isa.* If we had but the ghostly helps in England which they have in Spain, I might deceive you if you did— Sir, 'tis not the restraint, but the innate principle, secures the reputation and honour of our sex.——Let me tell you, sir, confinement sharpens the invention, as want of sight strengthens the other senses, and is often more pernicious than the recreation that innocent liberty allows.

*Sir Jeal.* Say you so, mistress! who the devil taught you the art of reasoning? I assure you, they must have a greater faith than I pretend to, that can think any woman innocent who requires liberty; therefore, Patch, to your charge I give her; lock her up till I come back from Change. I shall have some sauntering coxcomb, with nothing but a red coat and a feather, think by leaping into her arms to leap into my estate—but I'll prevent them; she shall be only signior Babinetto's.

*Patch.* Really, sir, I wish you would employ any body else in this affair; I lead a life like a dog with obeying your commands. Come, madam, will you please to be locked up?

*Isa.* Aye, to enjoy more freedom than he is aware of. [*Aside.*] [*Exit with* PATCH.

*Sir Jeal.* I believe this wench is very true to my interest: I am happy I met with her, if I can but keep my daughter from being blown upon till Signior Babinetto arrives, who shall marry her as soon as he comes, and carry her to Spain as soon as he has married her. She has a pregnant wit, and I'd no more have her an English wife than the Grand Signior's mistress. [*Exit.*

*Enter* WHISPER.

*Whis.* So, I saw sir Jealous go out: where shall I find Mrs Patch now?

*Enter* PATCH.

*Patch.* Oh, Mr Whisper! my lady saw you out of the window, and ordered me to bid you fly, and let your master know she's now alone.

*Whisp.* Hush! speak softly! I go, I go! But hark ye, Mrs Patch, shall not you and I have a little confabulation, when my master and your lady are engaged?

*Patch.* Aye, aye; farewell.
[*Goes in, and shuts the door.*

*Re-enter* SIR JEALOUS TRAFFICK, *meeting* WHISPER.

*Sir Jeal.* Sure, whilst I was talking with Mr Tradewell, I heard my door clap. [*Seeing* WHISPER.] Ha! a man lurking about my house! Who do you want there, sir?

*Whisp.* Want—want? a pox! Sir Jealous! What must I say now?

*Sir Jeal.* Ay, want! Have you a letter or message for any body there? O' my conscience this is some he-bawd—

*Whisp.* Letter or message, sir?

*Sir Jeal.* Ay, letter or message, sir?

*Whisp.* No, not I, sir.

*Sir Jeal.* Sirrah, sirrah! I'll have you set in the stocks, if you don't tell your business immediately.

*Whisp.* Nay, sir, my business—is no great matter of business neither, and yet 'tis business of consequence, too.

*Sir Jeal.* Sirrah, don't trifle with me.

*Whisp.* Trifle, sir! have you found him, sir?

*Sir Jeal.* Found what, you rascal?

*Whis.* Why, Trifle is the very lap-dog my lady lost, sir! I fancied I saw him run into this house. I'm glad you've seen him—Sir, my lady will be overjoyed that I have found him.

*Sir Jeal.* Who is your lady, friend?

*Whisp.* My lady Lovepuppy, sir.

*Sir Jeal.* My lady Lovepuppy, sir! then, prithee, carry thyself to her, for I know of no other whelp that belongs to her; and let me catch you no more puppy-hunting about my doors, lest I have you prest into the service, sirrah.

*Whis.* By no means, sir—Your humble servant. I must watch whether he goes or no, before I can tell my master. [*Exit* WHISPER.

*Sir Jeal.* This fellow has the officious leer of a pimp, and I half suspect a design; but I'll be upon them before they think on me, I warrant them. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—CHARLES's *lodgings.*

*Enter* CHARLES *and* MARPLOT.

*Cha.* Honest Marplot! I thank thee for this supply. I expect my lawyer with a thousand pounds I have ordered him to take up, and then you shall be repaid.

*Mar.* Pho, pho! no more of that. Here comes sir George Airy,

*Enter* SIR GEORGE.

cursedly out of humour at his disappointment.—See how he looks! ha, ha, ha!

*Sir Geo.* Ah, Charles! I am so humbled in my pretensions to plots upon women, that I believe I shall never have courage enough to attempt a chambermaid again—I'll tell thee———

*Cha.* Ha, ha, ha! I'll spare you the relation by telling you—Impatient to know your business with my father, when I saw you enter I slipt back into the next room, where I overheard every yllable.

*Mar.* Did you, Charles? I wish I had been with you.

*Sir Geo.* That I said—but I'll be hanged if you heard her answer—But, prithee, tell me, Charles, is she a fool?

*Cha.* I never suspected her for one; but Marplot can inform you better, if you'll allow him a judge.

*Mar.* A fool! I'll justify she has more wit than all the rest of her sex put together. Why, she'll rally me till I han't a word to say for myself.

*Cha.* A mighty proof of her wit, truly—

*Mar.* There must be some trick in it, sir George: egad I'll find it out, if it cost me the sum you paid for it.

*Sir Geo.* Do, and command me——

*Mar.* Enough! let me alone to trace a secret———

*Enter* WHISPER, *and speaks aside to his master.*

The devil! he here again? damn that fellow, he never speaks out! Is this the same, or a new secret? You may speak out; here are none but friends.

*Cha.* Pardon me, Marplot, 'tis a secret.

*Mar.* A secret! aye, or ecod I would not give a farthing for it. Sir George, won't you ask Charles what news Whisper brings?

*Sir Geo.* Not I, sir; I suppose it does not relate to me.

*Mar.* Lord lord! how little curiosity some people have! Now, my chief pleasure is in knowing every body's business.

*Sir Geo.* I fancy, Charles, thou hast some engagement upon thy hands?

*Mar.* Have you, Charles?

*Sir Geo.* I have a little business, too.

*Mar.* Have you, sir George?

*Sir Geo.* Marplot, if it falls in your way to bring me any intelligence from Miranda, you'll find me at the Thatched-house at six—

*Mar.* You do me much honour.

*Cha.* You guess right, sir George; wish me success.

*Sir Geo.* Better than attended me. Adieu! [*Exit* SIR GEORGE.

*Cha.* Marplot, you must excuse me———

*Mar.* Nay, nay; what need of any excuse amongst friends? I'll go with you.

*Cha.* Indeed, you must not.

*Mar.* No! then, I suppose it is a duel, and I will go to secure you.

*Cha.* Well, but tis no duel, consequently no danger; therefore, prithee be answered.

*Mar.* What, is't a mistress, then? Mum—you know I can be silent upon occasion.

*Cha.* I wish you could be civil, too: I tell you, you neither must nor shall go with me.—Farewell! [*Exit* CHARLES.

*Mar.* Why then—I must and will follow you. [*Exit.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.

*Enter* CHARLES.

*Char.* WELL, here's the house which holds the lovely prize, quiet and serene: here no noisy footmen throng to tell the world that beauty dwells within; no ceremonious visit makes the lover wait, no rival to give my heart a pang.—Who would not scale the window at midnight without fear of the jealous father's pistol, rather than fill up the train of a coquette, where every minute he is jostled out of place! [*Knocks softly.*] Mrs Patch, Mrs Patch!

*Enter* PATCH.

*Patch.* Oh, are you come, sir? All's safe.

*Cha.* So! in, in, then.

*Enter* MARPLOT.

*Mar.* There he goes! Who the devil lives here? except I can find out that, I am as far from knowing his business as ever. Gad I'll watch; it may be a bawdy-house, and he may have his throat cut. If there should be any mischief I can make oath he went in. Well, Charles, in spite of your endeavours to keep me out of the secret, I may save your life for aught I know. At that corner I'll plant myself; there I shall see whoever goes in or comes out. Gad I love discoveries. [*Exit* MAR.

### SCENE II.

*Draws, and discovers* CHARLES, ISABINDA, *and* PATCH.

*Isa.* Patch, look out sharp; have a care of dad.

*Patch.* I warrant you.

*Isa.* Well, sir, if I may judge your love by your courage, I ought to believe you sincere; for you venture into the lion's den when you come to see me.

*Cha.* If you'd consent whilst the furious beast is abroad, I'd free you from the reach of his paws.

*Isa.* That would be but to avoid one danger by running into another; like poor wretches, who fly the burning ship, and meet their fate in the water. Come, come, Charles; I fear, if I consult my reason, confinement and plenty is better than liberty and starving. I know you would make the frolic pleasing for a little time, by saying and doing a world of tender things; but, when our small substance is exhausted, and a thousand requisites for life are wanting, Love, who rarely dwells with Poverty, would also fail us.

*Cha.* Faith, I fancy not; methinks my heart has laid up a stock will last for life; to back which I have taken a thousand pounds upon my uncle's estate; that surely will support us till one of our fathers relent.

*Isa.* There's no trusting to that, my friend. I doubt your father will carry his humour to the grave, and mine till he sees me settled in Spain.

*Cha.* And can you, then, cruelly resolve to stay till that cursed Don arrives, and suffer that youth, beauty, fire, and wit, to be sacrificed to the arms of a dull Spaniard, to be immured, and forbid the sight of any thing that's human?

*Isa.* No; when it comes to that extremity, and no stratagem can relieve us, thou shalt list for a soldier, and I'll carry thy knapsack after thee.

*Cha.* Bravely resolved! the world cannot be more savage than our parents, and fortune generally assists the bold; therefore consent now: why should we put it to a future hazard? who knows when we shall have another opportunity?

*Isa.* Oh, you have your ladder of ropes, I suppose, and the closet window stands just where it did; and if you han't forgot to write in characters, Patch will find a way for our assignations. Thus much of the Spanish contrivance my father's severity has taught me, I thank him: though I hate the nation, I admire their management in these affairs.

*Enter* PATCH.

*Patch.* Oh, madam! I see my master coming up the street.

*Cha.* Oh, the devil! would I had my ladder now! I thought you had not expected him till night. Why, why, why, why, what shall I do, madam?

*Isa.* Oh! for Heaven's sake, don't go that way; you'll meet him full in the teeth. Oh, unlucky moment!

*Cha.* 'Adsheart! can you shut me into no cupboard, nor ram me into a chest, ha?

*Patch.* Impossible, sir; he searches every hole in the house.

*Isa.* Undone for ever! if he sees you, I shall never see you more.

*Patch.* I have thought on it: run you to your chamber, madam; and, sir, come you along with me; I'm certain you may easily get down from the balcony.

*Cha.* My life! adieu—Lead on, guide.

[*Exeunt* PATCH *and* CHA.

*Isa.* Heaven preserve him! [*Exit* ISA.

### SCENE III.—*Changes to the street.*

*Enter* SIR JEALOUS, *with* MARPLOT *behind him.*

*Sir Jeal.* I don't know what's the matter, but I have a strong suspicion all is not right within; that fellow's sauntering about my door, and his tale of a puppy, had the face of a lie, methought.

By St Iago, if I should find a man in the house, I'd make mince-meat of him—

*Mar.* Mince-meat! Ah, poor Charles! how I sweat for thee! Egad he's old—I fancy I might bully him, and make Charles have an opinion of my courage. Egad I'll pluck up, and have a touch with him.

*Sir Jeal.* My own key shall let me in; I'll give them no warning. [*Feeling for his key.*

*Mar.* What's that you say, sir?

[*Going up to* SIR JEAL.

*Sir Jeal.* What's that to you, sir?

[*Turns quick upon him.*

*Mar.* Yes, 'tis to me, sir; for the gentleman you threaten is a very honest gentleman. Look to't, for if he comes not as safe out of your house as he went in——

*Sir Jeal.* What, is he in, then?

*Mar.* Yes sir, he is in then; and, I say, if he does not come out, I have half a dozen myrmidons hard by, shall beat your house about your ears.

*Sir Jeal.* Ah! a combination to undo me—I'll myrmidon you, ye dog you!—Thieves! thieves!

[*Beats* MARPLOT *all the while he cries thieves.*

*Mar.* Murder! murder! I was not in your house, sir.

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* What's the matter, sir?

*Sir Jeal.* The matter, rascal! you have let a man into my house; but I'll flea him alive. Follow me; I'll not leave a mousehole unsearched. If I find him, by St Iago, I'll equip him for the opera. [*Exit* SIR JEAL.

*Mar.* A deuce of his cane! there's no trusting to age—What shall I do to relieve Charles? egad I'll raise the neighbourhood.——Murder! murder!—[CHARLES *drops down upon him from the balcony.*] Charles! faith I'm glad to see thee safe out, with all my heart!

*Cha.* A pox of your bawling! how the devil came you here?

*Mar.* Egad it's very well for you that I was here; I have done you a piece of service: I told the old thunderbolt that the gentleman that was gone in was——

*Cha.* Was it you that told him, sir? [*Laying hold of him.*] 'Sdeath! I could crush thee into atoms. [*Exit* CHA.

*Mar.* What! will you choke me for my kindness? Will my inquiring soul never leave searching into other people's affairs till it gets squeezed out of my body? I dare not follow him now for my blood, he's in such a passion. I'll to Miranda; if I can discover aught that may oblige sir George, it may be a means to reconcile me again to Charles.

*Sir Jeal.* [*Within.*] Look about! search! find him out!

*Mar.* Oh, the devil! there's old Crabstick again! [*Exit* MAR.

*Enter* SIR JEALOUS *and his Servants.*

*Sir Jeal.* Are you sure you have searched every where?

*Ser.* Yes, from the top of the house to the bottom.

*Sir Jeal.* Under the beds, and over the beds?

*Ser.* Yes, and in them too, but found nobody, sir.

*Sir Jeal.* Why, what could this rogue mean?

*Enter* ISABINDA *and* PATCH.

*Patch.* Take courage, madam; I saw him safe out. [*Aside to* ISA.

*Isa.* Bless me! what's the matter, sir?

*Sir Jeal.* You know best—Pray, where's the man that was here just now?

*Isa.* What man, sir? I saw none.

*Patch.* Nor I, by the trust you repose in me. Do you think I would let a man come within these doors, when you are absent?

*Sir Jeal.* Ah, Patch! she may be too cunning for thy honesty: the very scout, that he had set to give warning, discovered it to me—and threatened me with half a dozen myrmidons——but I think I mauled the villain. These afflictions you draw upon me, mistress!

*Isa.* Pardon me, sir; 'tis your own ridiculous humour draws you into these vexations, and gives every fool pretence to banter you.

*Sir Jeal.* No, 'tis your idle conduct, your coquettish flirting into the balcony—Oh! with what joy shall I resign thee into the arms of Don Diego Babinetto!

*Isa.* And with what industry shall I avoid him! [*Aside.*

*Sir Jeal.* Certainly that rogue had a message from somebody or other, but, being baulked by my coming, popped that sham upon me. Come along, ye sots! let's see if we can find the dog again. Patch! lock her up, d'ye hear?

[*Exit* SIR JEAL.

*Patch.* Yes, sir—Ay, walk till your heels ache; you'll find nobody, I promise you.

*Isa.* Who could that scout be whom he talks of?

*Patch.* Nay, I can't imagine, without it was Whisper.

*Isa.* Well, dear Patch! let's employ all our thoughts how to escape this horrid Don Diego; my very heart sinks at his terrible name.

*Patch.* Fear not, madam; Don Carlo shall be the man, or I'll lose the reputation of contriving; and then, what's a chambermaid good for?

*Isa.* Say'st thou so, my girl? then

'Let dad be jealous, multiply his cares;
'Whilst love instructs me to avoid the snares,
'I'll, spite of all his Spanish caution, show
'How much for love a British maid can do.'

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—SIR FRANCIS GRIPE'S *house.*

*Enter* SIR FRANCIS *and* MIRANDA *meeting.*

*Mir.* Well, Gardy, how did I perform the dumb scene?

*Sir Fran.* To admiration—Thou dear little rogue! let me buss thee for it: nay, adad I will, Chargy, so muzzle, and tuzzle, and hug thee; I will, i'faith, I will. [*Hugging and kissing her.*

*Mir.* Nay, Gardy, don't be so lavish. Who would ride post when the journey lasts for life?

*Sir Fran.* Ah wag, ah wag! I'll buss thee again for that. Oh, I'm transported! When, when, my dear, wilt thou convince the world of the happy day? when shall we marry, ha?

*Mir.* There's nothing wanting but your consent, sir Francis,

*Sir Fran.* My consent! what does my charmer mean?

*Mir.* Nay, 'tis only a whim; but I'll have every thing according to form—therefore, when you sign an authentic paper, drawn up by an able lawyer, that I have your leave to marry, the next day makes me yours, Gardy.

*Sir Fran.* Ha, ha, ha! a whim indeed! why, is it not demonstration I give my leave, when I marry thee?

*Mir.* Not for your reputation, Gardy; the malicious world will be apt to say you trick me into marriage, and so take the merit from my choice: now, I will have the act my own, to let the idle fops see how much I prefer a man loaded with years and wisdom.

*Sir Fran.* Humph! Prithee leave out years, Chargy; I'm not so old, as thou shalt find. Adad I'm young: there's a caper for ye! [*Jumps.*

*Mir.* Oh, never excuse it; why, I like you the better for being old—but I shall suspect you don't love me, if you refuse me this formality.

*Sir Fran.* Not love thee, Chargy! Adad I do love thee better than, than, than, better than—what shall I say? egad better than money; i'faith I do——

*Mir.* That's false, I'm sure. [*Aside.*] To prove it, do this, then.

*Sir Fran.* Well, I will do it, Chargy, provided I bring a licence at the same time.

*Mir.* Ay, and a parson, too, if you please. Ha, ha, ha! I can't help laughing to think how all the young coxcombs about town will be mortified when they hear of our marriage!

*Sir Fran.* So they will, so they will; ha, ha, ha!

*Mir.* Well, I fancy I shall be so happy with my Gardy—

*Sir Fran.* If wearing pearls and jewels, or eating gold, as the old saying is, can make thee happy, thou shalt be so, my sweetest, my lovely, my charming, my—verily I know not what to call thee.

*Mir.* You must know, Gardy, that I am so eager to have this business concluded, that I have employed my woman's brother, who is a lawyer in the Temple, to settle matters just to your liking. You are to give your consent to my marriage, which is to yourself you know: but, mum, you must take no notice of that. So then I will, that is, with your leave, put my writings into his hands; then, to-morrow, we come slap upon them with a wedding that nobody thought on, by which you seize me and my estate, and I suppose make a bonfire of your own act and deed.

*Sir Fran.* Nay, but Chargy, if——

*Mir.* Nay, Gardy, no ifs——Have I refused three northern lords, two British peers, and half a score knights, to have you put in your ifs?

*Sir Fran.* So thou hast indeed, and I will trust to thy management. 'Od, I'm all of a fire!

*Mir.* 'Tis a wonder the dry stubble does not blaze. [*Aside.*

*Enter* MARPLOT.

*Sir Fran.* How now, who sent for you, sir? What, is the hundred pound gone already?

*Mar.* No, sir; I don't want money, now, Gardy.

*Sir Fran.* No, that's a miracle! but there's one thing you want I'm sure.

*Mar.* Ay, what's that?

*Sir Fran.* Manners! What, had I no servants without?

*Mar.* None that could do my business, guardian, which is at present with this lady.

*Mir.* With me, Mr Marplot! what is it, I beseech you?

*Sir Fran.* Ay, sir, what is it? any thing that relates to her may be delivered to me.

*Mar.* I deny that.

*Mir.* That's more than I do, sir.

*Mar.* Indeed, madam! Why, then, to proceed: Fame says—you know best whether she lies or not—that you and my most conscionable guardian here have designed, contrived, plotted, and agreed, to chouse a very civil, honest, honourable gentleman out of a hundred pounds: Guilty or not?

*Mir.* That I contrived it!

*Mar.* Ay, you—you said never a word against it; so far you are guilty.

*Sir Fran.* Pray tell that civil, honest, honourable gentleman, that if he has any more such sums to fool away, they shall be received like the last; ha, ha, ha! Choused, quotha! But hark ye, let him know at the same time, that if he dare to report I tricked him of it, I shall recommend a lawyer to him shall shew him a trick for twice as much. D'ye hear? tell him that.

*Mar.* So, and this is the way you use a gentleman, and my friend!

*Mir.* Is the wretch thy friend?

*Mar.* The wretch! look ye, madam, don't call names; egad I won't take it.

*Mir.* Why, you won't beat me, will you? Ha, ha!

*Mar.* I don't know whether I will or no.

*Sir Fran.* Sir, I shall make a servant shew you out at the window if you are saucy.

*Mar.* I am your most humble servant, guardian; I design to go out the same way I came in. I would only ask this lady one question; don't you think he's a fine gentleman?

*Sir Fran.* Who's a fine gentleman?

*Mar.* Not you, Gardy; not you! Don't you think in your soul that sir George Airy is a very fine gentleman?

*Mir.* He dresses well.

*Sir Fran.* Which is chiefly owing to his tailor and valet de chambre.

*Mar.* Well! and who is your dress owing to, ha? There's a beau, ma'am—do but look at him!

*Sir Fran.* Sirrah!

*Mir.* And if being a beau be a proof of his being a fine gentleman, he may be so.

*Mar.* He may be so! Why, ma'am, the judicious part of the world allow him wit, courage, gallantry, ay, and economy, too; though I think he forfeited that character, when he flung away a hundred pounds upon your dumb ladyship.

*Sir Fran.* Does that gall him? Ha, ha, ha!

*Mir.* So, sir George, remaining in deep discontent, has sent you, his trusty squire, to utter his complaint. Ha, ha, ha!

*Mar.* Yes, madam; and you, like a cruel hard-hearted Jew, value it no more—than I would your ladyship, were I sir George; you, you, you——

*Mir.* Oh, don't call names: I know you love to be employed, and I'll oblige you, and you shall carry him a message from me.

*Mar.* According as I like it. What is it?

*Mir.* Nay, a kind one, you may be sure—— First, tell him I have chose this gentleman, to have and to hold, and so forth.

[*Clapping her hand into* SIR FRANCIS'S.

*Mar.* Much good may do you!

*Sir Fran.* Oh, the dear rogue! how I dote on her! [*Aside.*

*Mir.* And advise his impertinence to trouble me no more, for I prefer sir Francis for a husband before all the fops in the universe.

*Mar.* Oh Lord, oh Lord! she's bewitched, that's certain. Here's a husband for eighteen—here's a titbit for a young lady—here's a shape, an air, and a grace—here's bones rattling in a leathern bag—[*Turning* SIR FRANCIS *about.*]—Here's buckram and canvas to scrub you to repentance.

*Sir Fran.* Sirrah, my cane shall teach you repentance presently.

*Mar.* No, faith; I have felt its twin brother from just such a whithered hand too lately.

*Mir.* One thing more; advise him to keep from the garden-gate on the left hand; for if he dare to saunter there, about the hour of eight, as he used to do, he shall be saluted with a pistol or a blunderbuss.

*Sir Fran.* Oh, monstrous! Why, Chargy, did he use to come to the garden-gate?

*Mir.* The gardener described just such another man that always watched his coming out, and fain would have bribed him for his entrance—Tell him he shall find a warm reception if he comes this night.

*Mar.* Pistols and blunderbusses! Egad! a warm reception indeed! I shall take care to inform him of your kindness, and advise him to keep farther off.

*Mir.* I hope he will understand my meaning better than to follow your advice. [*Aside.*

*Sir Fran.* Thou hast signed, sealed, and taken possession of my heart for ever, Chargy, ha, ha, ha! and for you, Mr Saucebox, let me have no more of your messages, if ever you design to inherit your estate, gentleman.

*Mar.* Why, there 'tis now. Sure I shall be out of your clutches one day—Well, Guardian, I say no more: but if you be not as arrant a cuckold as e'er drove bargain upon the exchange, or paid attendance to a court, I am the son of a whetstone; and so your humble servant. [*Going.*

*Mir.* Mr Marplot, don't forget the message: ha, ha, ha, ha!

*Mar.* Nang, nang, nang! [*Exit.*

*Sir Fran.* I am so provoked—'tis well he's gone.

*Mir.* Oh, mind him not, Gardy, but let's sign articles, and then—

*Sir Fran.* And then—Adad I believe I am metamorphosed; my pulse beats high, and my blood boils, methinks——

[*Kissing and hugging her.*

*Mir.* Oh, fie, Gardy! be not so violent: consider the market lasts all the year.—Well; I'll in, and see if the lawyer be come: you'll follow? [*Exit.*

*Sir Fran.* Ay, to the world's end, my dear! Well, Frank, thou art a lucky fellow in thy old age, to have such a delicate morsel, and thirty thousand pounds, in love with thee. I shall be the envy of bachelors, the glory of married men, and the wonder of the town. Some guardians would be glad to compound for part of the estate at dispatching an heiress, but I engross the whole. *O! mihi præteritos referet si Jupiter annos.* [*Exit.*

## SCENE V.—*Changes to a tavern.*

*Discovers* SIR GEORGE *and* CHARLES *with wine before them, and* WHISPER *waiting.*

*Sir Geo.* Nay, prithee, don't be grave, Charles: misfortunes will happen. Ha, ha, ha! 'tis some comfort to have a companion in our sufferings.

*Cha.* I am only apprehensive for Isabinda; her father's humour is implacable; and how far his jealousy may transport him to her undoing, shocks my soul to think.

*Sir Geo.* But since you escaped undiscovered by him, his rage will quickly lash into a calm; never fear it.

*Cha.* But who knows what that unlucky dog, Marplot, told him; nor can I imagine what brought him hither: that fellow is ever doing mischief; and yet, to give him his due, he never designs it. This is some blundering adventure wherein he thought to shew his friendship, as he calls it! a curse on him!

*Sir Geo.* Then you must forgive him. What said he?

*Cha.* Said! nay, I had more mind to cut his throat, than to hear his excuses.

*Sir Geo.* Where is he?

*Whis.* Sir, I saw him go into sir Francis Gripe's just now.

*Cha.* Oh! then he's upon your business, sir George: a thousand to one but he makes some mistake there, too!

*Sir Geo.* Impossible, without he huffs the lady and makes love to sir Francis.

*Enter Drawer.*

*Draw.* Mr Marplot is below, gentlemen, and desires to know if he may have leave to wait upon ye.

*Cha.* How civil the rogue is when he has done a fault!

*Sir Geo.* Ho! desire him to walk up. Prithee, Charles, throw off this chagrin, and be good company.

*Cha* Nay, hang him, I'm not angry with him. Whisper, fetch me pen, ink, and paper.

*Whisp.* Yes, sir. [*Exit* WHISPER.

*Enter* MARPLOT.

*Cha.* Do but mark his sheepish look, sir George.

*Mar.* Dear Charles! don't overwhelm a man already under insupportable affliction. I'm sure I always intend to serve my friends; but if my malicious stars deny the happiness, is the fault mine?

*Sir Geo.* Never mind him, Mr Marplot; he's eat up with spleen. But tell me, what says Miranda?

*Mar.* Says!—nay, we are all undone there, too.

*Cha.* I told you so; nothing prospers that he undertakes.

*Mar.* Why, can I help her having chose your father for better for worse?

*Cha.* So; there's another of Fortune's strokes. I suppose I shall be edged out of my estate with twins every year, let who will get them.

*Sir Geo.* What! is the woman really possessed?

*Mar.* Yes, with the spirit of contradiction: she railed at you most prodigiously.

*Sir Geo.* That's no ill sign.

*Enter* WHISPER, *with pen, ink, and paper.*

*Mar.* You'd say it was no good sign, if you knew all.

*Sir Geo.* Why, prithee!

*Mar.* Hark'e, sir George, let me warn you; pursue your old haunt no more; it may be dangerous.

[CHARLES *sits down to write.*

*Sir Geo.* My old haunt! what do you mean?

*Mar.* Why, in short, then, since you will have it, Miranda vows, if you dare approach the garden-gate at eight o'clock, as you used, you shall meet with a warm reception.

*Sir Geo.* A warm reception!

*Mar.* Aye, a very warm reception—you shall be saluted with a blunderbuss, sir. These were her very words: nay, she bid me tell you so, too.

*Sir Geo.* Ha! the garden gate at eight, as I used to do! There must be meaning in this. Is there such a gate, Charles?

*Mar.* Is there such a gate, Charles?

*Cha.* Yes, yes; it opens into the Park: I suppose her ladyship has made many a scamper through it.

*Sir Geo.* It must be an assignation, then. Ha! my heart springs for joy; 'tis a propitious omen. My dear Marplot! Let me embrace thee; thou art my friend, my better angel.

*Mar.* What do you mean, sir George?

*Sir Geo.* No matter what I mean. Here, take a bumper to the garden-gate, you dear rogue you!

*Mar.* You have reason to be transported, sir George; I have saved your life.

*Sir Geo.* My life! thou hast saved my soul, man. Charles, if thou dost not pledge this health, may'st thou never taste the joys of love!

*Cha.* Whisper, be sure you take care how you deliver this.—[*Gives him the letter.*]—Bring me the answer to my lodgings.

*Whis.* I warrant you, sir.

*Mar.* Whither does that letter go? Now, dare I not ask for my blood—That fellow knows more secrets than I do.

[*Exit* WHISPER.

*Cha.* Now I'm for you.

*Sir Geo.* To the garden-gate at the hour of eight, Charles: along; huzza!

*Cha.* I begin to conceive you.

*Mar.* That's more than I do, egad——To the garden-gate, huzza!—[*Drinks.*]—But, I hope, you design to keep far enough off on't, sir George?

*Sir Geo.* Aye, aye; never fear that; she shall see I despise her frowns; let her use the blunderbuss against the next fool; she sha'nt reach me with the smoke, I warrant her; ha, ha, ha!

*Mar.* Ah, Charles! if you could receive a disappointment thus *en cavalier*, one should have some comfort in being beat for you.

*Cha.* The fool comprehends nothing.

*Sir Geo.* Nor would I have him. Prithee, take him along with thee,

*Cha.* Enough.

*Sir Geo.* I kiss both your hands——And now for the garden gate!

'Tis beauty gives the assignation there,
And love too powerful grows to admit of fear.
[*Exit* SIR GEORGE.

*Cha.* Come, you shall go home with me.

*Mar.* Shall I! And are we friends, Charles? I am glad of it.

*Cha.* Come along.

[*Exit* SIR CHARLES.

*Mar.* Egad, Charles' asking me to go home with him, gives me a shrewd suspicion there's more in the garden-gate than I comprehend.—Faith, I'll give him the drop, and away to Gardy's, and find it out. [*Exit*

## ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The outside of* SIR JEALOUS TRAFFICK'S *house,* PATCH *peeping out of the door.*

*Enter* WHISPER.

*Whis.* HA! Mrs Patch, this is a lucky minute, to find you so readily; my master dies with impatience.

*Patch.* My lady imagined so; and, by her orders, I have been scouting this hour in search of you, to inform you, that sir Jealous has invited some friends to supper with him to-night, which gives an opportunity to your master to make use of his ladder of ropes. The closet window shall be open, and Isabinda ready to receive him. Bid him come immediately.

*Whis.* Excellent! he'll not disappoint her, I warrant him. But hold, I have a letter here, which I'm to carry an answer to. I cannot think what language the direction is.

*Patch.* Pho! 'tis no language, but a character which the lovers invented to avert discovery——Ha! I hear my old master coming down stairs; it is impossible you should have an answer: away, and bid him come himself for that. Begone! we're ruined, if you're seen, for he has doubled his care since the last accident.

*Whis.* I go, I go.

[*Exit* WHISPER.

*Patch.* There, go thou into my pocket.—[*Puts it beside, and it falls down.*]—Now, I'll up the back-stairs, lest I meet him—Well, a dexterous chambermaid is the ladies' best utensil, I say.

[*Exit* PATCH.

*Enter* SIR JEALOUS, *with a letter in his hand.*

*Sir Jea.* So, this is some comfort; this tells me that signior Don Diego Babinetto is safely arrived. He shall marry my daughter the minute he comes——Ha! What's here!——[*Takes up the letter* PATCH *dropped.*]—A letter! I don't know what to make of the superscription. I'll see what's within-side.—[*Opens it.*]—Humph—'tis Hebrew, I think. What can this mean?—There must be some trick in it. This was certainly designed for my daughter; but I don't know that she can speak any language but her mother tongue. No matter for that; this may be one of love's hieroglyphicks; and I fancy I saw Patch's tail sweep by: that wench may be a slut, and, instead of guarding my honour, betray it. I'll find it out, I'm resolved———Who's there?

*Enter Servant.*

What answer did you bring from the gentlemen I sent you to invite?

*Ser.* That they'd all wait on you, sir, as I told you before; but I suppose you forgot, sir?

*Sir Jea.* Did I so, sir? but I sha'nt forget to break your head, if any of them come, sir.

*Ser.* Come, sir! Why, did not you send me to desire their company, sir?

*Sir Jea.* But I send you now to desire their absence. Say, I have something extraordinary fallen out, which calls me abroad, contrary to expectation, and ask their pardon; and, d'ye hear, send the butler to me.

*Ser.* Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

*Enter Butler.*

*Sir Jea.* If this paper has a meaning, I'll find it——Lay the cloth in my daughter's chamber, and bid the cook send supper thither, presently.

*But.* Yes, sir. Hey-day! What's the matter, now? [*Exit Butler.*

*Sir Jea.* He wants the eyes of Argus, that has a young, handsome daughter, in this town; but my comfort is, I shall not be troubled long with her. He, that pretends to rule a girl once in her teens, had better be at sea in a storm, and in less danger.

For let him do, or counsel all he can,
She thinks, and dreams of nothing else, but man. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—ISABINDA'S *chamber.*

*Enter* ISABINDA *and* PATCH.

*Isa.* Are you sure nobody saw you speak to Whisper?

*Patch.* Yes, very sure, madam; but I heard sir Jealous coming down stairs; so clapt this letter into my pocket. [*Feels for the letter.*

*Isa.* A letter! give it me quickly.

*Patch.* Bless me! What's become on't—I'm sure I put it——— [*Searching still.*

*Isa.* Is't possible that thou couldst be so careless? Oh, I'm undone for ever, if it be lost.

*Patch.* I must have dropt it upon the stairs.—But why are you so much alarmed? if the worst happens, nobody can read it, madam, nor find out whom it was designed for.

*Isa.* If it falls into my father's hands, the very figure of a letter will produce ill consequences.—Run, and look for it upon the stairs this moment.

*Patch.* Nay, I'm sure it can be no where else.—[*As she is going out of the door, meets the butler.*]—How now, what do you want?

*But.* My master ordered me to lay the cloth here for supper.

*Isa.* Ruined past redemption——— [*Aside.*

*Patch.* You mistake, sure. What shall we do?

*Isa.* I thought he expected company to-night—Oh, poor Charles! Oh, unfortunate Isabinda!

*But.* I thought so, too, madam; but I suppose he has altered his mind.

[*Lays the cloth, and exit.*

*Isa.* The letter is the cause. This heedless action has undone me. Fly, and fasten the closet-window, which will give Charles notice to retire. Ha! my father! oh, confusion!

*Enter* SIR JEALOUS.

*Sir Jea.* Hold, hold, Patch! whither are you going? I'll have nobody stir out of the room till after supper.

*Patch.* Sir, I was going to reach your easy chair—oh, wretched accident!

*Sir Jea.* I'll have nobody stir out of the room. I don't want my easy chair.

*Isa.* What will be the event of this? [*Aside.*

*Sir Jea.* Hark ye, daughter, do you know this hand?

*Isa.* As I suspected——Hand, do you call it, sir? 'tis some school-boy's scrawl.

*Patch.* Oh, Invention! Thou chambermaid's best friend, assist me!

*Sir Jea.* Are you sure you don't understand it?

[PATCH *feels in her bosom, and shakes her coats.*

*Isa.* Do you understand it, sir?

*Sir Jeal.* I wish I did.

*Isa.* Thank Heaven you do not!—[*Aside.*]—Then I know no more of it than you do, indeed, sir.

*Patch.* Oh Lord, Oh Lord! What have you done, sir? Why, the paper is mine, I dropped it out of my bosom.

[*Snatching it from him.*

*Sir Jeal.* Ha! yours, mistress?

*Isa.* What does she mean by owning it?

*Patch.* Yes, sir, it is.

*Sir Jeal.* What is it? Speak!

*Patch.* Yes, sir, it is a charm for the toothache—I have worn it these seven years; 'twas given me by an angel, for aught I know, when I was raving with the pain, for nobody knew from whence he came, nor whither he went. He charged me never to open it, lest some dire vengeance befell me; and Heaven knows what will be the event. Oh, cruel misfortune! that I should drop it, and you should open it———If you had not opened it——

*Isa.* Excellent wench! [*Aside.*

*Sir Jeal.* Pox of your charms and whims for me! If that be all, 'tis well enough: there, there, burn it, and, I warrant you, no vengeance will follow.

*Patch.* So, all's right again, thus far. [*Aside.*

*Isa.* I would not lose Patch for the world——I'll take courage a little.—[*Aside.*]—Is this usage for your daughter, sir? Must my virtue and conduct be suspected for every trifle? You immure me like some dire offender here, and deny me all the recreations which my sex enjoy, and the custom of the country, and modesty, allow; yet, not content with that, you make my confinement more intolerable by your mistrusts and jealousies. Would I were dead, so I were free from this!

*Sir Jeal.* To-morrow rids you of this tiresome load: Don Diego Babinetto will be here; and then my care ends, and his begins.

*Isa.* Is he come, then? Oh, how shall I avoid this hated marriage!

*Enter servants with supper.*

*Sir Jeal.* Come, will you sit down?

*Isa.* I cannot eat, sir.

*Patch.* No, I dare swear he has given her supper enough. I wish I could get into the closet. [*Aside.*

*Sir Jeal.* Well, if you cannot eat, then give me a song, whilst I do.

*Isa.* I have such a cold I can scarce speak, sir, much less sing. How shall I prevent Charles coming in? [*Aside.*

*Sir Jeal.* I hope you have the use of your fingers, madam. Play a tune upon your spinnet, whilst your woman sings me a song.

*Patch.* I am as much out of tune as my lady, if he knew all. [*Aside.*

*Isa.* I shall make excellent music.

[*Sits down to play.*

*Patch.* Really, sir, I am so frighted about your opening this charm, that I cannot remember one song.

*Sir Jeal.* Pish! Hang your charm! Come, come; sing any thing.

*Patch.* Yes, I'm likely to sing, truly.—[*Aside.*]—Humph, humph; bless me! I cannot raise my voice, my heart pants so.

*Sir Jeal.* Why, what, does your heart pant so, that you cannot play, neither? Pray, what key are you in, ha?

*Patch.* Ah, would the key was turned on you once! [*Aside.*

*Sir Jeal.* Why don't you sing, I say?

*Patch.* When madam has put her spinnet in tune, sir; humph, humph——

*Isa.* I cannot play, sir, whatever ails me.

[*Rising.*

*Sir Jeal.* Zounds! sit down and play me a tune, or I'll break the spinnet about your ears.

*Isa.* What will become of me?

[*Sits down and plays.*

*Sir Jeal.* Come, mistress. [*To* PATCH.

*Patch.* Yes, sir.

[*Sings, but horribly out of tune.*

*Sir Jeal.* Hey, hey! Why, you are a-top of the house, and you are down in the cellar? what is the meaning of this? is it on purpose to cross me, ha?

*Patch.* Pray, madam, take it a little lower; I cannot reach that note—nor any note I fear.

*Isa.* Well, begin—Oh, Patch, we shall be discovered.

*Patch.* I sink with apprehension, madam—— Humph, humph—[*Sings.*]

[CHARLES *opens the closet door.*

*Cha.* Music and singing!

*'Tis thus the bright celestial court above*
*Beguiles the hours with music and with love.*

Death! her father there!—[*The women shriek.*]
—Then I must fly— [*Exit into the closet.*

[SIR JEALOUS *rises up hastily, seeing* CHA. *slip back into the closet.*

*Sir Jeal.* Hell and furies! A man in the closet!——

*Patch.* Ah! a ghost! a ghost!—He must not enter the closet—[ISABINDA *throws herself down before the closet door, as in a swoon.*]

*Sir Jeal.* The devil! I'll make a ghost of you, I warrant you. [*Strives to get by.*

*Patch.* Oh, hold, sir! have a care; you'll tread upon my lady—Who waits there? Bring some water. Oh! this comes of your opening the charm. Oh, oh, oh, oh! [*Weeps aloud.*

*Sir Jeal.* I'll charm you, housewife. Here lies the charm that conjured this fellow in, I'm sure on't. Come out, you rascal, do so. Zounds! take her from the door, or I'll spurn her from it, and break your neck down stairs.

*Isa.* He's gone; I heard him leap down.

[*Aside to* PATCH.

*Patch.* Nay, then, let him enter—Here, here, madam, smell to this; come, give me your hand; come nearer to the window; the air will do you good.

*Sir Jeal.* I would she were in her grave.—Where are you, sirrah? Villain! robber of my honour! I'll pull you out of your nest.

[*Goes into the closet.*

*Patch.* You'll be mistaken, old gentleman; the bird is flown.

*Isa.* I'm glad I have escaped so well; I was almost dead in earnest with the fright.

*Re-enter* SIR JEALOUS *out of the closet.*

*Sir Jeal.* Whoever the dog were, he has escaped out of the window, for the sash is up: but, though he is got out of my reach, you are not.—And first, Mrs Pander, with your charms for the tooth-ache, get out of my house! go, troop! yet hold—stay—I'll see you out of my doors myself; but I'll secure your charge, ere I go.

*Isa.* What do you mean, sir? Was she not a creature of your own providing?

*Sir Jeal.* She was of the devil's providing, for aught I know.

*Patch.* What have I done, sir, to merit your displeasure?

*Sir Jeal.* I don't know which of you have done it, but you shall both suffer for it, till I can discover whose guilt it is. Go, get in there; I'll move you from this side of the house.—[*Pushes* ISABINDA *in at the door, and locks it, puts the key in his pocket*]—I'll keep the key myself; I'll try what ghost can get into that room: and now, forsooth, I'll wait on you down stairs.

*Patch.* Ah, my poor lady! Down stairs, sir! But I won't go out, sir, till I have locked up my clothes.

*Sir Jeal.* If thou wert as naked as thou wert born, thou shouldst not stay to put on a smock. Come along, I say. When your mistress is married, you shall have your rags, and every thing that belongs to you; but, till then——

[*Exit, pulling her out.*

*Patch.* Oh, barbarous usage for nothing!

*Re-enter at the lower end.*

*Sir Jeal.* There, go, and come no more within sight of my habitation these three days, I charge you. [*Slaps the door after her.*

*Patch.* Did ever any body see such an old monster!

*Enter* CHARLES.

Oh, Mr Charles! Your affairs and mine are in an ill posture.

*Cha.* I am inured to the frowns of fortune; but what has befallen thee?

*Patch.* Sir Jealous, whose suspicious nature is always on the watch, nay, even while one eye sleeps, the other keeps centinel, upon sight of you, flew into such a violent passion, that I could find no stratagem to appease him; but, in spite of all arguments, he locked his daughter into his own apartment, and turned me out of doors.

*Cha.* Ha! oh Isabinda!

*Patch.* And swears she shall see neither sun nor moon, till she is Don Diego Babinetto's wife, who arrived last night, and is expected with impatience.

*Cha.* He dies; yes, by all the wrongs of love,

he shall: Here will I plant myself, and through my breast he shall make his passage, if he enters.

*Patch.* A most heroic resolution! there might be ways found out more to your advantage: policy is often preferred to open force.

*Cha.* I apprehend you not.

*Patch.* What think you of personating this Spaniard, imposing upon the father, and marrying your mistress by his own consent?

*Cha.* Say'st thou so, my angel? Oh, could that be done, my life to come would be too short to recompense thee: but how can I do that, when I neither know what ship he came in, nor from what part of Spain, who recommends him, or how attended?

*Patch.* I can solve all this. He is from Madrid; his father's name Don Pedro Questo Portento Babinetto. Here's a letter of his to sir Jealous, which he dropt one day. You understand Spanish, and the hand may be counterfeited.—You conceive me, sir?

*Cha.* My better genius! Thou hast revived my drooping soul. I'll about it instantly. Come to my lodgings, and we'll concert matters.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*A garden-gate open*; SCENTWELL *waiting within.*

*Enter* SIR GEORGE AIRY.

*Sir Geo.* So, this is the gate, and most invitingly open. If there should be a blunderbuss here, now, what a dreadful ditty would my fall make for fools, and what a jest for the wits! how my name would be roared about the streets! Well, I'll venture all.

*Scent.* Hist, hist! sir George Airy— [*Enters.*

*Sir Geo.* A female voice! thus far I'm safe—My dear!

*Scent.* No, I'm not your dear; but I'll conduct you to her. Give me your hand; you must go through many a dark passage and dirty step before you arrive—

*Sir Geo.* I know I must, before I arrive at paradise; therefore, be quick, my charming guide.

*Scent.* For aught you know. Come, come, your hand, and away.

*Sir Geo.* Here, here, child; you can't be half so swift as my desires. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*The house.*

*Enter* MIRANDA.

*Mir.* Well, let me reason a little with my mad self. Now, don't I transgress all rules, to venture upon a man without the advice of the grave and wise? But then, a rigid, knavish guardian, who would have married me—to whom? even to his nauseous self, or nobody. Sir George is what I have tried in conversation, inquired into his character, and am satisfied in both. Then his love! Who would have given a hundred pounds only to have seen a woman he had not infinitely loved? So I find my liking him has furnished me with arguments enough of his side; and now, the only doubt remains whether he will come or no.

*Enter* SCENTWELL *and* SIR GEORGE.

*Scent.* That's resolved, madam; for here's the knight. [*Exit* SCENTWELL.

*Sir Geo.* And do I once more behold that lovely object, whose idea fills my mind, and forms my pleasing dreams!

*Mir.* What, beginning again in heroicks!—Sir George, don't you remember how little fruit your last prodigal oration produced? Not one bare single word in answer.

*Sir Geo.* Ha! the voice of my incognita!—Why did you take ten thousand ways to captivate a heart your eyes alone had vanquished?

*Mir.* Pr'ythee, no more of these flights; for our time's but short, and we must fall to business. Do you think we can agree on that same terrible bugbear, matrimony, without heartily repenting on both sides?

*Sir Geo.* It has been my wish since first my longing eyes beheld you.

*Mir.* And your happy ears drank in the pleasing news I had thirty thousand pounds.

*Sir Geo.* Unkind! did I not offer you, in those purchased minutes, to run the risk of your fortune, so you would but secure that lovely person to my arms?

*Mir.* Well, if you have such love and tenderness, since our wooing has been short, pray reserve it for our future days, to let the world see we are lovers after wedlock; 'twill be a novelty.

*Sir Geo.* Haste then, and let us tie the knot, and prove the envied pair——

*Mir.* Hold, not so fast; I have provided better than to venture on dangerous experiments headlong——My guardian, trusting to my dissembled love, has given up my fortune to my own disposal, but with this proviso, that he to-morrow morning weds me. He is now gone to Doctors Commons for a licence.

*Sir Geo.* Ha! a licence!

*Mir.* But I have planted emissaries that infallibly take him down to Epsom, under a pretence that a brother usurer of his is to make him his executor, a thing on earth he covets.

*Sir Geo.* 'Tis his known character.

*Mir.* Now my instruments confirm him this man is dying, and he sends me word he goes this minute. It must be to-morrow ere he can be undeceived: that time is ours.

*Sir Geo.* Let us improve it then, and settle on our coming years endless, endless happiness!

*Mir.* I dare not stir till I hear he's on the road ——then I and my writings, the most material point, are soon removed.

*Sir Geo.* I have one favour to ask: if it lies in your power, you would be a friend to poor Charles; though the son of this tenacious man, he is as free from all his vices as nature and a good education can make him; and what now I have vanity enough to hope will induce you, he is the man on earth I love.

*Mir.* I never was his enemy, and only put it on as it helped my designs on his father. If his uncle's estate ought to be in his possession, which I shrewdly suspect, I may do him a singular piece of service.

*Sir Geo.* You are all goodness.

*Enter* SCENTWELL.

*Scent.* Oh, madam! my master and Mr Marplot are just coming into the house.

*Mir.* Undone, undone! if he finds you here in this crisis all my plots are unravelled.

*Sir Geo.* What shall I do? can't I get back into the garden?

*Scent.* O no! he comes up those stairs.

*Mir.* Here, here, here! can you condescend to stand behind this chimney-board, sir George?

*Sir Geo.* Any where, any where, dear madam! without ceremony.

*Scent.* Come, come, sir; lie close——

[*They put him behind the chimney board.*

*Enter* SIR FRANCIS *and* MARPLOT; SIR FRANCIS *peeling an orange.*

*Sir Fran.* I could not go, though 'tis upon life and death, without taking leave of dear Chargy. Besides, this fellow buzzed into my ears, that thou might'st be so desperate as to shoot that wild rake which haunts the garden-gate, and that would bring us into trouble, dear——

*Mir.* So, Marplot brought you back then?

*Mar.* Yes, I brought him back.

*Mir.* I'm obliged to him for that, I'm sure.

[*Frowning at* MARPLOT *aside.*

*Mar.* By her looks she means she's not obliged to me. I have done some mischief now, but what, I can't imagine.

*Sir Fran.* Well, Chargy, I have had three messengers to come to Epsom, to my neighbour Squeezum's, who, for all his vast riches, is departing. [*Sighs.*

*Mar.* Ay, see what all you usurers must come to.

*Sir Fran.* Peace, you young knave! Some forty years hence I may think on't—But, Chargy, I'll be with thee to-morrow before those pretty eyes are open; I will, I will, Chargy; I'll rouse you, i'faith—Here, Mrs Scentwell, lift up your lady's chimney-board, that I may throw my peel in, and not litter her chamber.

*Mir.* Oh my stars! what will become of us now?

*Scent.* Oh, pray, sir, give it me; I love it above all things in nature; indeed I do.

*Sir Fran.* No, no, hussy; you have the green pip already; I'll have no apothecary's bills.

[*Goes towards the chimney.*

*Mir.* Hold, hold, hold, dear Gardy! I have a, a, a, a, a, monkey shut up there; and if you open it before the man comes that is to tame it, 'tis so wild 'twill break all my china, or get away, and that would break my heart; for I'm fond on't to distraction—next thee, dear Gardy!

[*In a flattering tone.*

*Sir Fran.* Well, well, Chargy, I won't open it; she shall have her monkey, poor rogue! Here, throw this peel out of the window.

[*Exit* SCENT.

*Mar.* A monkey! dear madam, let me see it; I can tame a monkey as well as the best of them all. Oh, how I love the little miniatures of man!

*Mir.* Be quiet, mischief! and stand farther from the chimney——You shall not see my monkey—why sure— [*Striving with him.*

*Mar.* For Heaven's sake, dear madam! let me but peep, to see if it be as pretty as lady Fiddle Faddle's. Has it got a chain?

*Mir.* Not yet, but I design it one shall last its lifetime. Nay, you shall not see it.——Look, Gardy, how he teazes me!

*Sir Fran.* [*Getting between him and the chimney.*] Sirrah, sirrah, let my Chargy's monkey alone, or bamboo shall fly about your ears. What! is there no dealing with you.

*Mar.* Pugh, pox of the monkey! here's a rout! I wish he may rival you.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* Sir, they have put two more horses to the coach, as you ordered, and 'tis ready at the door.

*Sir Fran.* Well, I am going to be executor; better for thee, jewel. B'ye, Chargy; one buss! —I'm glad thou hast got a monkey to divert thee a little.

*Mir.* Thank'e, dear Gardy!—Nay, I'll see you to the coach.

*Sir Fran.* That's kind, adad!

*Mir.* Come along, impertinence.

[*To* MARPLOT.

*Mar.* [*Stepping back.*] Egad, I will see the monkey now. [*Lifts up the board, and discovers* SIR GEORGE.] O Lord! O Lord! Thieves! thieves! murder!

*Sir Geo.* Damn ye, you unlucky dog! 'tis I, Which way shall I get out? Shew me instantly, or I'll cut your throat.

*Mar.* Undone, undone! At that door there. But hold, hold; break that china, and—I'll bring you off.

[*He runs off at the corner, and throws down some china.*]

*Re-enter* SIR FRANCIS, MIRANDA, *and* SCENTWELL.

*Sir Fran.* Mercy on me! what's the matter?

*Mir.* O, you toad! what have you done?

*Mar.* No great harm; I beg of you to forgive me: Longing to see the monkey, I did but just raise up the board, and it flew over my shoulders, scratched all my face, broke yon china, and whisked out of the window.

*Sir Fran.* Where, where is it, sirrah?

*Mar.* There, there, sir Francis, upon your neighbour Parmazan's pantiles.

*Sir Fran.* Was ever such an unlucky rogue! Sirrah, I forbid you my house. Call the servants to get the monkey again. Pug, Pug, Pug! I would stay myself to look for it, but that you know my earnest business.

*Scent.* Oh, my lady will be best to lure it back: all them creatures love my lady extremely.

*Mir.* Go, go, dear Gardy! I hope I shall recover it.

*Sir Fran.* B'ye, b'ye, dearee! Ah, mischief! how you look now! B'ye, b'ye.

[*Exit* SIR FRAN.

*Mir.* Scentwell, see him in the coach, and bring me word.

*Scent.* Yes, madam. [*Exit* SCENT.

*Mir.* So, sir, you have done your friend a signal piece of service, I suppose?

*Mar.* Why, look you, madam, if I have committed a fault, thank yourself; no man is more serviceable when I am let into a secret, and none more unlucky at finding it out. Who could divine your meaning? when you talked of a blunderbuss, who thought of a rendezvous? and when you talked of a monkey, who the devil dreamt of sir George?

*Mir.* A sign you converse but little with our sex, when you can't reconcile contradictions.

*Enter* SCENTWELL.

*Scent.* He's gone, madam, as fast as the coach and six can carry him——

*Enter* SIR GEORGE.

*Sir Geo.* Then I may appear.

*Mar.* Here's Pug, ma'am—Dear sir George! make my peace. On my soul I never took you for a monkey before!

*Sir Geo.* I dare swear thou didst not. Madam, I beg you to forgive him.

*Mir.* Well, sir George, if he can be secret.

*Mar.* 'Odsheart, madam! I'm as secret as a priest, when trusted.

*Sir Geo.* Why, 'tis with a priest our business is at present.

*Scent.* Madam, here's Mrs Isabinda's woman to wait on you.

*Mir.* Bring her up.

*Enter* PATCH.

How do ye, Mrs Patch? What news from your lady?

*Patch.* That's for your private ear, madam. Sir George, there's a friend of your's has an urgent occasion for your assistance.

*Sir Geo.* His name?

*Patch.* Charles.

*Mar.* Ha! then there's something a-foot that I know nothing of. I'll wait on you, sir George.

*Sir Geo.* A third person may not be proper, perhaps. As soon as I have dispatched my own affairs, I am at his service. I'll send my servant to tell him I'll wait on him in half an hour.

*Mir.* How came you employed in this message, Mrs Patch?

*Patch.* Want of business, madam; I am discharged by my master, but hope to serve my lady still.

*Mir.* How! discharged! you must tell me the whole story within.

*Patch.* With all my heart, madam.

*Mar.* Tell it here, Mrs Patch. Pish, Pox! I wish I were fairly out of the house. I find marriage is the end of this secret; and now I am half mad to know what Charles wants him for.

[*Aside.*

*Sir Geo.* Madam, I'm doubly pressed by love and friendship. This exigence admits of no delay. Shall we make Marplot of the party?

*Mir.* If you'll run the hazard, sir George; I believe he means well.

*Mar.* Nay, nay; for my part, I desire to be let into nothing; I'll be gone; therefore, pray don't mistrust me. [*Going.*

*Sir Geo.* So, now he has a mind to be gone to Charles: but not knowing what affairs he may have upon his hands at present—I'm resolved he shan't stir. No, Mr Marplot, you must not leave us; we want a third person.

[*Takes hold of him.*

*Mar.* I never had more mind to be gone in my life.

*Mir.* Come along, then; if we fail in the voyage, thank yourself for taking this ill-starred gentleman on board.

*Sir Geo.* That vessel ne'er can unsuccessful prove,
Whose freight is beauty, and whose pilot's love.

[*Exit* SIR GEORGE *and* MIRANDA.

*Mar.* Tyty ti, tyty ti. [*Steals off the other way.*

*Re-enter* SIR GEORGE.

*Sir Geo.* Marplot! Marplot!

*Mar.* [*Entering.*] Here! I was coming, sir George. Lord, can't you let one tie up one's garter? [*Exeunt.*

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.

*Enter* MIRANDA, PATCH, *and* SCENTWELL.

*Mir.* WELL, Patch, I have done a strange bold thing; my fate is determined, and expectation is no more. Now, to avoid the impertinence and roguery of an old man, I have thrown myself into the extravagance of a young one: if he should despise, slight, or use me ill, there's no remedy from a husband but the grave; and that's a terrible sanctuary to one of my age and constitution.

*Patch.* O! fear not, madam; you'll find your account in sir George Airy; it is impossible a man of sense should use a woman ill, endued with beauty, wit, and fortune. It must be the lady's fault, if she does not wear the unfashionable name of wife easy, when nothing but complaisance and good humour is requisite on either side to make them happy.

*Mir.* I long till I am out of this house, lest any accident should bring my guardian back. Scentwell, put my best jewels into the little casket, slip them into thy pocket, and let us march off to sir Jealous's.

*Scent.* It shall be done, madam. [*Exit* SCENT.

*Patch.* Sir George will be impatient, madam. If their plot succeeds, we shall be well received; if not, he will be able to protect us. Besides, I long to know how my young lady fares.

*Mir.* Farewell old Mammon, and thy detested walls! 'Twill be no more sweet sir Francis! I shall be compelled the odious task of dissembling no longer to get my own, and coax him with the wheedling names of my precious, my dear, dear Gardy! O Heavens!

*Enter* SIR FRANCIS *behind.*

*Sir Fran.* Ah, my sweet Chargy! don't be frighted · [*She starts*] but thy poor Gardy has been abused, cheated, fooled, betrayed; but nobody knows by whom.

*Mir.* Undone, past redemption! [*Aside*].

*Sir Fran.* What! won't you speak to me, Chargy?

*Mir.* I am so surprised with joy to see you, I know not what to say.

*Sir Fran.* Poor dear girl! But do you know that my son, or some such rogue, to rob or murder me, or both, contrived this journey? for, upon the road, I met my neighbour Squeezum well, and coming to town.

*Mir.* Good lack! good lack! what tricks are there in this world!

*Enter* SCENTWELL, *with a diamond necklace in her hand, not seeing* SIR FRANCIS.

*Scent.* Madam, be pleased to tie this necklace on, for I can't get into the—[*Seeing* SIR FRANCIS.

*Mir.* The wench is a fool, I think! could you not have carried it to be mended without putting it in the box?

*Sir Fran.* What's the matter?

*Mir.* Only, dearee! I bid her, I bid her—— Your ill usage has put every thing out of my head. But won't you go, Gardy, and find out these fellows, and have them punished?—and, and——

*Sir Fran.* Where should I look for them, child? no, I'll sit me down contented with my safety, nor stir out of my own doors till I go with thee to a parson.

*Mir.* [*Aside.*] If he goes into his closet I am ruined. Oh bless me! in this fright I had forgot Mrs Patch.

*Patch.* Aye, madam; and I stay for your speedy answer.

*Mir.* [*Aside.*] I must get him out of the house. Now, assist me, Fortune!

*Sir Fran.* Mrs Patch! I profess I did not see you: how dost thou do, Mrs Patch? Well, don't you repent leaving my Chargy?

*Patch.* Yes, every body must love her—but I come now——Madam, what did I come for? my invention is at the last ebb.

[*Aside to* MIRANDA.

*Sir Fran.* Nay, never whisper; tell me.

*Mir.* She came, dear Gardy! to invite me to her lady's wedding, and you shall go with me, Gardy; 'tis to be done this moment, to a Spanish merchant. Old sir Jealous keeps on his humour; the first minute he sees her, the next he marries her.

*Sir Fran.* Ha, ha, ha, ha! I'd go, if I thought the sight of matrimony would tempt Chargy to perform her promise. There was a smile! there was a consenting look, with those pretty twinklers, worth a million! Ods-precious! I am happier than the Great Mogul, the emperor of China, or all the potentates that are not in wars.—Speak, confirm it, make me leap out of my skin!

*Mir.* When one has resolved, 'tis in vain to stand shilly-shally. If ever I marry, positively this is my wedding-day.

*Sir Fran.* Oh! happy, happy man! Verily I will beget a son the first night shall disinherit that dog, Charles. I have estate enough to purchase a barony, and be the immortalizing the whole family of the Gripes.

*Mir.* Come, then, Gardy; give me thy hand; let's to this house of Hymen.

My choice is fixed, let good or ill betide.

*Sir Fran.* The joyful bridegroom I,

*Mir.* And I the happy bride. [*Exeunt.*

### SCENE II.

*Enter* SIR JEALOUS, *meeting a Servant.*

*Serv.* Sir, here's a couple of gentlemen inquire

for you; one of them calls himself Signior Diego Babinetto.

*Sir Jeal.* Ha! Signior Babinetto! admit them instantly—joyful minute! I'll have my daughter married to-night.

*Enter* CHARLES *in a Spanish habit, with* SIR GEORGE, *dressed like a merchant.*

Senhor, beso las manos: vuestra merced es muy bien venido en esta tierra.

*Cha.* Senhor, soy muy humilde, y muy obligado cryado de vuestra merced: mi padre embia a vuestra merced, los mas profondos de sus respetos; y a commissionado este mercadel Ingles, de concluyr un negocio, que me haze el mas dichoss hombre del mundo, haziendo me su yerno.

*Sir Jeal.* I am glad on't, for I find I have lost much of my Spanish. Sir, I am your most humble servant. Signior Don Diego Babinetto has informed me that you are commissioned by signior Don Pedro, &c. his worthy father——

*Sir Geo.* To see an affair of marriage consummated between a daughter of your's and signior Diego Babinetto his son here. True, sir, such a trust is reposed in me, as that letter will inform you. I hope, 'twill pass upon him.—[*Aside.*] [*Gives him a letter.*

*Sir Jeal.* Aye, 'tis his hand. [*Seems to read.*

*Sir Geo.* Good; you have counterfeited to a nicety, Charles. [*Aside to* CHARLES.

*Cha.* If the whole plot succeeds as well, I'm happy.

*Sir Jeal.* Sir, I find by this that you are a man of honour and probity; I think, sir, he calls you Meanwell?

*Sir Geo.* Meanwell is my name, sir.

*Sir Jeal.* A very good name, and very significant.

*Cha.* Yes, faith, if he knew all. [*Aside.*

*Sir Jeal.* For, to mean well, is to be honest; and to be honest, is the virtue of a friend; and a friend is the delight and support of human society.

*Sir Geo.* You shall find that I'll discharge the part of a friend in what I have undertaken, sir Jealous.

*Cha.* But little does he think to whom. [*Aside.*

*Sir Geo.* Therefore, sir, I must entreat the presence of your fair daughter, and the assistance of your chaplain; for signior Don Pedro strictly enjoined me to see the marriage rites performed as soon as we should arrive, to avoid the accidental overtures of Venus.

*Sir Jeal.* Overtures of Venus!

*Sir Geo.* Aye, sir; that is, those little hawking females that traverse the Park and the playhouse to put off their damaged ware—they fasten upon foreigners like leeches, and watch their arrival as carefully as the Kentish men do a shipwreck: I warrant you they have heard of him already.

*Sir Jeal.* Nay, I know this town swarms with them.

*Sir Geo.* Aye, and then you know the Spaniards are naturally amorous, but very constant; the first face fixes them; and it may be very dangerous to let him ramble ere he is tied.

*Cha.* Well hinted.

*Sir Jeal.* Pat to my purpose! Well, sir, there is but one thing more, and they shall be married instantly.

*Cha.* Pray Heaven, that one thing more don't spoil all! [*Aside.*

*Sir Jeal.* Don Pedro writ me word, in his last but one, that he designed the sum of five thousand crowns, by way of jointure, for my daughter; and that it should be paid into my hand upon the day of marriage——

*Cha.* Oh, the devil! [*Aside.*

*Sir Jeal.* In order to lodge it in some of our funds, in case she should become a widow, and return for England——

*Sir Geo.* Pox on't, this is an unlucky turn!—What shall I say? [*Aside.*

*Sir Jeal.* And he does not mention one word of it in this letter.

*Cha.* I don't know how he should. [*Aside.*

*Sir Geo.* Humph! True, sir Jealous, he told me such a thing, but, but, but, but—he, he, he—he did not imagine that you would insist upon the very day; for, for, for, for money, you know, is dangerous returning by sea, an, an, an, an——

*Cha.* Zounds! say we have brought it in commodities. [*Aside to* SIR GEORGE.

*Sir Geo.* And so, sir, he has sent it in merchandize, tobacco, sugars, spices, lemons, and so forth, which shall be turned into money with all expedition: in the mean time, sir, if you please to accept of my bond for performance——

*Sir Jeal.* It is enough, sir; I am so pleased with the countenance of signior Diego, and the harmony of your name, that I'll take your word, and will fetch my daughter this moment. Within there.

*Enter Servant.*

Desire Mr Tackum, my neighbour's chaplain, to walk hither.

*Serv.* Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

*Sir Jeal.* Gentlemen, I'll return in an instant. [*Exit.*

*Cha.* Wondrous well! let me embrace thee.

*Sir Geo.* Egad, that five thousand crowns had like to have ruined the plot.

*Cha.* But that's over; and if Fortune throws no other rubs in our way——

*Sir Geo.* Thou'lt carry the prize——But hist! here he comes.

*Enter* SIR JEALOUS, *dragging in* ISABINDA.

*Sir Jeal.* Come along, you stubborn baggage you! come along.

*Isa.* Oh! hear me, sir; hear me but speak one word:
Do not destroy my everlasting peace;
My soul abhors this Spaniard you have chose,
Nor can I wed him without being curst.

*Sir Jeal.* How's that!

*Isa.* Let this posture move your tender nature. [*Kneels.*
For ever will I hang upon these knees,
Nor loose my hands, till you cut off my hold,
If you refuse to hear me, sir.

*Cha.* Oh! that I could discover myself to her! [*Aside.*

*Sir Geo.* Have a care what you do: you had better trust to his obstinacy. [*Aside.*

*Sir Jeal.* Did you ever see such a perverse slut? Off, I say. Mr Meanwell, pray help me a little.

*Sir Geo.* Rise, madam, and do not disoblige your father, who has provided a husband worthy of you; one that will love you equal with his soul, and one that you will love, when once you know him.

*Isa.* Oh! never, never!
Could I suspect that falsehood in my heart,
I would this moment tear it from my breast,
And straight present him with the treacherous part.

*Cha.* Oh! my charming, faithful dear! [*Aside.*

*Sir Jeal.* Falsehood! why, who the devil are you in love with? Don't provoke me; for, by St Iago, I shall beat you, housewife.

*Cha.* Heaven forbid! for I shall infallibly discover myself if he should.

*Sir Geo.* Have patience, madam, and look at him: why will ye prepossess yourself against a man, that is master of all the charms you would desire in a husband.

*Sir Jeal.* Ay, look at him, Isabinda. Senhor pase vind adelante.

*Cha.* My heart bleeds to see her grieve, whom I imagined would with joy receive me. Senhora obligue me vuestra merced de sa mano.

*Sir Jeal.* [*Pulling up her head.*] Hold up your head, hold up your head, hussy, and look at him. Is there a properer, handsomer, better shaped, fellow in England, ye jade you? Ha! see, see the obstinate baggage shuts her eyes; by St Iago I hsve a good mind to beat them out. [*Pushes her down.*

*Isab.* Do then, sir, kill me; kill me instantly;
'Tis much the kinder action of the two,
For 'twill be worse than death to wed him.

*Sir Geo.* Sir Jealous, you are too passionate. Give me leave; I'll try, by gentle words, to work her to your purpose.

*Sir Jeal.* I pray do, Mr Meanwell, I pray do; she'll break my heart. [*Weeps.*] There is, in that, jewels of the value of three thousand pounds, which were her mother's; and a paper, wherein I have settled one half of my estate upon her now, and the whole when I die, but provided she marries this gentleman; else by St Iago I'll turn her out of doors to beg or starve. Tell her this, Mr Meanwell; pray do. [*Walks off.*

*Sir Geo.* Ha! this is beyond expectation—— Trust to me, sir; I'll lay the dangerous consequence of disobeying you at this juncture before her, I warrant you.

*Cha.* A sudden joy runs through my heart, like a propitious omen. [*Aside.*

*Sir Geo.* Come, madam, do not blindly cast your life away, just in the moment you would wish to save it.

*Isa.* Pray, cease your trouble, sir; I have no wish but sudden death to free me from this hated Spaniard. If you are his friend, inform him what I say; my heart is given to another youth, whom I love with the same strength of passion that I hate this Diego, with whom, if I am forced to wed, my own hand shall cut the Gordian knot.

*Sir Geo.* Suppose this Spaniard, whom you strive to shun, should be the very man to whom you'd fly?

*Isa.* Ha!

*Sir Geo.* Would you not blame your rash resolve, and curse your eyes that would not look on Charles?

*Isa.* On Charles? Oh! you have inspired new life, and collected every wandering sense. Where is he? Oh! let me fly into his arms. [*Rises.*

*Sir Geo.* Hold, hold, hold! 'Sdeath! madam, you'll ruin all! Your father believes him to be signior Babinetto. Compose yourself a little, pray, madam. [*He runs to* SIR JEALOUS.

*Cha.* Her eyes declare she knows me. [*Aside.*

*Sir Geo.* She begins to hear reason, sir; the fear of being turned out of doors has done it. [*Runs back to* ISABINDA.

*Isa.* 'Tis he! Oh, my ravished soul!

*Sir Geo.* Take heed, madam, you don't betray yourself. Seem with reluctance to consent, or you are undone.—[*Runs to* SIR JEALOUS.]—Speak gently to her, sir; I'm sure she'll yield; I see it in her face.

*Sir Jeal.* Well, Isabinda, can you refuse to bless a father, whose only care is to make you happy, as Mr Meanwell has informed you? Come, wipe thy eyes; nay, prithee, do, or thou wilt break thy father's heart. See, thou bring'st the tears in mine, to think of thy undutiful carriage to me. [*Weeps.*

*Isa.* Oh, do not weep, sir! your tears are like a poignard to my soul. Do with me what you please; I am all obedience.

*Sir Jeal.* Ha! then thou art my child again.

*Sir Geo.* 'Tis done; and now, friend, the day's thy own.

*Cha.* The happiest of my life, if nothing intervene.

*Sir Jea.* And wilt thou love him?

*Isa.* I will endeavour it, sir.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* Sir, here is Mr Tackum.

*Sir Jeal.* Shew him into the parlour. Senhor tome vind sueipora; cette momento les junta les manos.

[*Gives her to* CHARLES.

*Cha.* Oh, transport! Senhor, yo la recibo como se deve un tesoro tan grande. Oh! my joy, my life, my soul!

[*Embrace.*

*Isa.* My faithful, everlasting comfort!

*Sir Jeal.* Now, Mr Meanwell, let's to the parson,

Who, by his art, will join this pair for life,
Make me the happiest father, her the happiest wife.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to the street before* SIR JEALOUS'S *door.*

*Enter* MARPLOT.

*Mar.* I have hunted all over the town for Charles, but cannot find him; and, by Whisper's scouting at the end of the street, I suspect he must be in the house again. I am informed, too, that he has borrowed a Spanish habit out of the play-house: what can it mean?

*Enter a servant of* SIR JEALOUS'S *to him, out of the house.*

Hark'e, sir, do you belong to this house?

*Ser.* Yes, sir.

*Mar.* Isn't your name Richard!

*Ser.* No, sir, Thomas.

*Mar.* Oh, aye, Thomas——Well, Thomas, there's a shilling for you.

*Ser.* Thank you, sir.

*Mar.* Pray, Thomas, can you tell if there be a gentleman in it in a Spanish habit?

*Ser.* There's a Spanish gentleman within, that is just a-going to marry my young lady, sir.

*Mar.* Are you sure he is a Spanish gentleman?

*Ser.* I'm sure he speaks no English that I hear of.

*Mar.* Then that cannot be him I want; for 'tis an English gentleman that I inquire after; he may be dressed like a Spaniard, for aught I know.

*Ser.* Ha! Who knows but this may be an impostor? I'll inform my master; for, if he should be imposed upon, he'll beat us all round.—[*Aside.*]—Pray, come in, sir, and see if this be the person you inquire for.

*Mar.* Aye, I'll follow you——Now for't.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to the inside of the house.*

*Enter* MARPLOT *and servant.*

*Ser.* Sir, please to stay here; I'll send my master to you. [*Exit.*

*Mar.* So, this was a good contrivance. If this be Charles now, he will wonder how I found him out.

*Enter servant and* SIR JEALOUS.

*Sir Jeal.* What is your earnest business, blockhead, that you must speak with me before the ceremony's past? Ha! who's this?

*Ser.* Why, this gentleman, sir, wants another gentleman in a Spanish habit, he says.

*Sir Jeal.* In a Spanish habit! 'tis some friend of signior Don Diego's, I warrant. Sir, your servant.

*Mar.* Your servant, sir.

*Sir Jeal.* I suppose you would speak with signior Babinetto.

*Mar.* Sir!

*Sir Jeal.* I say, I suppose you would speak with signior Babinetto.

*Mar.* Hey day! What the devil does he say now? Sir, I don't understand you.

*Sir Jeal.* Don't you understand Spanish, sir?

*Mar.* Not I, indeed, sir.

*Sir Jeal.* I thought you had known signior Babinetto.

*Mar.* Not I, upon my word, sir.

*Sir Jeal.* What then, you'd speak with his friend, the English merchant, Mr Meanwell?

*Mar.* Neither, sir, not I; I don't mean any such thing.

*Sir Jeal.* Why, who are you, then, sir? And what do you want? [*In an angry tone.*

*Mar.* Nay, nothing at all; not I, sir. Pox on him! I wish I were out; he begins to exalt his voice; I shall be beaten again.

*Sir Jeal.* Nothing at all, sir! Why, then, what business have you in my house? ha!

*Ser.* You said you wanted a gentleman in a Spanish habit.

*Mar.* Why, aye; but his name is neither Babinetto nor Meanwell.

*Sir Jeal.* What is his name, then, sirrah? Ha! Now I look at you again, I believe you are the rogue that threatened me with half-a-dozen myrmidons——

*Mar.* Me, sir! I never saw your face in all my life, before.

*Sir Jeal.* Speak, sir, who is it you look for? or, or——

*Mar.* A terrible old dog! Why, sir, only an honest young fellow of my acquaintance——I thought that here might be a ball, and that he might have been here in masquerade. 'Tis Charles, sir Francis Gripe's son, because I knew he used to come hither sometimes.

*Sir Jeal.* Did he so? not that I know of, I'm sure. Pray Heaven that this be Don Diego—If I should be tricked now—Ha! my heart misgives me plaguily—Within there! stop the marriage—Run, sirrah; call all my servants! I'll be satisfied that this is signior Pedro's son, ere he has my daughter.

*Mar.* Ha! Sir George! What have I done, now?

*Enter* SIR GEORGE, *with a drawn sword, between the scenes.*

*Sir Geo.* Ha! Marplot here—oh, the unlucky dog!—What's the matter, sir Jealous?

*Sir Jeal.* Nay, I don't know the matter, Mr Meanwell.

*Mar.* Upon my soul, sir George——

[*Going up to* SIR GEORGE.

*Sir Jeal.* Nay, then, I'm betrayed, ruined, undone! Thieves, traitors, rogues!—[*Offers to go in.*]—Stop the marriage, I say——

*Sir Geo.* I say, go on, Mr Tackum. Nay, no entering here; I guard this passage, old gentleman: the act and deed were both your own, and I'll see them signed, or die for't.

*Enter Servant.*

*Sir Jeal.* A pox on the act and deed! Fall on, knock him down.

*Sir Geo.* Aye, come on, scoundrels! I'll prick your jackets for you.

*Sir Jeal.* Zounds! sirrah, I'll be revenged on you. [*Beats* MARPLOT.

*Sir Geo.* Aye, there your vengeance is due. Ha, ha, ha!

*Mar.* Why, what do you beat me for? I han't married your daughter.

*Sir Jeal.* Rascals! Why don't you knock him down?

*Ser.* We are afraid of his sword, sir; if you'll take that from him, we'll knock him down presently.

*Enter* CHARLES *and* ISABINDA.

*Sir Jeal.* Seize her, then!

*Cha.* Rascals! retire; she's my wife; touch her if you dare; I'll make dog's meat of you.

*Mar.* Aye, I'll make dog's meat of you, rascals!

*Sir Jeal.* Ah! downright English——Oh, oh, oh, oh!

*Enter* SIR FRANCIS GRIPE, MIRANDA, PATCH, SCENTWELL, *and* WHISPER.

*Sir Fran.* Into the house of joy we enter, without knocking——Ha! I think 'tis the house of sorrow, sir Jealous.

*Sir Jeal.* Oh, sir Francis, are you come? what! was this your contrivance, to abuse, trick, and chouse me out of my child?

*Sir Fran.* My contrivance! What do you mean?

*Sir Jeal.* No, you don't know your son, there, in a Spanish habit?

*Sir Fran.* How! my son in a Spanish habit! Sirrah, you'll come to be hanged. Get out of sight, ye dog! get out of my sight!

*Sir Jeal.* Get out of your sight, sir! get out with your bags. Let's see what you'll give him now, to maintain my daughter on.

*Sir Fran.* Give him! he shall never be the better for a penny of mine—and you might have looked after your daughter better, sir Jealous.—Tricked, quotha! Egad, I think you designed to trick me: but, look ye, gentlemen, I believe I shall trick you both. This lady is my wife, do you see, and my estate shall descend only to the heirs of her body.

*Sir Geo.* Lawfully begotten by me—I shall be extremely obliged to you, sir Francis.

*Sir Fran.* Ha, ha, ha, ha! Poor sir George! You see your prospect was of no use; does not your hundred pound stick in your stomach? Ha, ha, ha!

*Sir Geo.* No, faith, sir Francis; this lady has given me a cordial for that.

[*Takes her by the hand.*

*Sir Fran.* Hold, sir, you have nothing to say to this lady.

*Sir Geo.* Nor you nothing to do with my wife, sir.

*Sir Fran.* Wife, sir?

*Mir.* Aye, really, guardian, 'tis even so. I hope you'll forgive my first offence.

*Sir Fran.* What! Have you choused me out of my consent, and your writings, then, mistress, ha?

*Mir.* Out of nothing but my own, guardian.

*Sir Jeal.* Ha, ha, ha! 'tis some comfort, at least, to see you are over-reached as well as myself. Will you settle your estate upon your son now?

*Sir Fran.* He shall starve first.

*Mir.* That I have taken care to prevent.—There, sir, are the writings of your uncle's estate, which have been your due these three years.

[*Gives* CHARLES *papers.*

*Cha.* I shall study to deserve this favour.

*Mar.* Now, how the devil could she get those writings, and I know nothing of it!

*Sir Fran.* What, have you robbed me too, mistress! Egad, I'll make you restore them——hussy, I will so.

*Sir Jeal.* Take care I don't make you pay the arrears, sir. 'Tis well 'tis no worse, since 'tis no better. Come, young man, seeing thou hast outwitted me, take her, and bless you both!

*Cha.* I hope, sir, you'll bestow your blessing, too; 'tis all I ask. [*Kneels.*

*Mar.* Do, Gardy, do.

*Sir Fran.* Confound you all!

[*Exit* SIR FRANCIS.

*Mar.* Mercy upon us, how he looks!

*Sir Geo.* Ha, ha, ha! ne'er mind his curses,

Charles; thou'lt thrive not one jot the worse for them. Since this gentleman is reconciled, we are all made happy.

*Sir Jeal.* I always loved precaution, and took care to avoid dangers; but, when a thing was past, I ever had philosophy to be easy.

*Cha.* Which is the true sign of a great soul. I loved your daughter, and she me; and you shall have no reason to repent her choice.

*Isa.* You will not blame me, sir, for loving my own country best.

*Mar.* So, here's every body happy, I find, but poor Pilgarlick. I wonder what satisfaction I shall have for being cuffed, kicked, and beaten in your service!

*Sir Jeal.* I have been a little too familiar with you, as things are fallen out; but, since there's no help for't, you must forgive me.

*Mar.* Egad, I think so—but, provided that you be not so familiar for the future.

*Sir Geo.* Thou hast been an unlucky rogue.

*Mar.* But very honest.

*Cha.* That I'll vouch for, and freely forgive thee.

*Sir Geo.* And I'll do you one piece of service more, Marplot; I'll take care that sir Francis make you master of your estate.

*Mar.* That will make me as happy as any of you.

*Patch.* Your humble servant begs leave to remind you, madam.

*Isa.* Sir, I hope you'll give me leave to take Patch into favour again.

*Sir Jeal.* Nay, let your husband look to that; I have done with my care.

*Cha.* Her own liberty shall always oblige me. Here's nobody but honest Whisper and Mrs Scentwell, to be provided for, now. It shall be left to their choice to marry, or keep their services.

*Whis.* Nay, then, I'll stick to my master.

*Scent.* Coxcomb! and I prefer my lady before a footman.

*Sir Jeal.* Hark! I hear the music; the fiddlers smell a wedding. What say you, young fellows, will you have a dance?

*Sir Geo.* With all my heart; call them in.

[*A Dance.*]

*Sir Jeal.* Now, let us in, and refresh ourselves with a cheerful glass, in which we'll bury all animosities: and,

By my example let all parents move,
And never strive to cross their childrens' love.
But still submit that care to Providence above.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

# THE

# WONDER;

## A

# WOMAN KEEPS A SECRET!

BY

*MRS CENTLIVRE.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### MEN.

DON LOPEZ, *a grandee of Portugal.*
DON FELIX, *his son, in love with* VIOLANTE.
FREDERICK, *a merchant.*
DON PEDRO, *father to* VIOLANTE.
COLONEL BRITON, *a Scotsman.*
GIBBY, *his footman.*
LISSARDO, *footman to* FELIX.

### WOMEN.

DONNA VIOLANTE, *designed for a nun by her father, in love with* FELIX.
DONNA ISABELLA, *sister to* FELIX.
INIS, *her maid.*
FLORA, *maid to* DONNA VIOLANTE.

*Alguazil, attendants, servants, &c.*

*Scene—Lisbon.*

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—*A Street.*

*Enter* DON LOPEZ, *meeting* FREDERICK.

*Fred.* My Lord, Don Lopez!

*Lop.* How d'ye, Frederick?

*Fred.* At your Lordship's service. I am glad to see you look so well, my lord. I hope Antonio's out of danger?

*Lop.* Quite contrary; his fever increases, they tell me; and the surgeons are of opinion his wound is mortal.

*Fred.* Your son, Don Felix, is safe, I hope?

*Lop.* I hope so, too; but they offer large rewards to apprehend him.

*Fred.* When heard your lordship from him?

*Lop.* Not since he went: I forbade him writing till the public news gave him an account of Antonio's health. Letters might be intercepted, and the place of his abode discovered.

*Fred.* Your caution was good, my lord. Though I am impatient to hear from Felix, yet his safety is my chief concern. Fortune has maliciously struck a bar between us in the affairs of life, but she has done me the honour to unite our souls.

*Lop.* I am not ignorant of the friendship between my son and you: I have heard him commend your morals, and lament your want of noble birth.

*Fred.* That's nature's fault, my lord. It is some comfort not to owe one's misfortunes to one's self; yet it is impossible not to regret the want of noble birth.

*Lop.* 'Tis a pity, indeed, such excellent parts, as you are master of, should be eclipsed by mean extraction.

*Fred.* Such commendation would make me vain, my lord, did you not cast in the allay of my extraction.

*Lop.* There is no condition of life without its cares; and it is the perfection of a man to wear them as easy as he can: this unfortunate duel of my son's does not pass without impression; but since it is past prevention, all my concern is now how he may escape the punishment. If Antonio dies, Felix shall for England. You have been there; what sort of people are the English?

*Fred.* My lord, the English are, by nature, what the ancient Romans were by discipline, courageous, bold, hardy, and in love with liberty. Liberty is the idol of the English, under whose banner all the nation lists: give but the word for liberty, and straight more armed legions would appear, than France and Philip keep in constant pay.

*Lop.* I like their principles: who does not wish for freedom in all degrees of life? though common prudence sometimes makes us act against it, as I am now obliged to do; for, I intend to marry my daughter to Don Guzman, whom I expect from Holland every day, whither he went to take possession of a large estate left him by his uncle.

*Fred.* You will not surely sacrifice the lovely Isabella to age, avarice, and a fool? Pardon the expression, my lord; but my concern for your beauteous daughter transports me beyond that good manners which I ought to pay your lordship's presence.

*Lop.* I can't deny the justness of the character, Frederick; but you are not insensible what I have suffered by these wars; and he has two things which render him very agreeable to me for a son-in-law—he is rich and well born: as for his being a fool, I don't conceive how that can be any blot in a husband, who is already possessed of a good estate. A poor fool, indeed, is a very scandalous thing, and so are your poor wits, in my opinion, who have nothing to be vain of but the inside of their sculls. Now, for Don Guzman, I know I can rule him as I think fit.—This is acting the politic part, Frederick, without which, it is impossible to keep up the port of this life.

*Fred.* But have you no consideration for your daughter's welfare, my lord?

*Lop.* Is a husband of twenty thousand crowns a-year no consideration? Now, I think it a very good consideration.

*Fred.* One way, my lord. But what will the world say of such a match?

*Lop.* Sir, I value not the world a button.

*Fred.* I cannot think your daughter can have any inclination for such a husband.

*Lop.* There, I believe, you are pretty much in the right, though it is a secret which I never had the curiosity to enquire into, nor, I believe, ever shall. Inclination, quotha! Parents would have a fine time on't, if they consulted their children's inclinations! I'll venture you a wager, that in all the garrison towns in Spain and Portugal during the late war, there was not three women who have not had an inclination for every officer in the whole army; does it, therefore, follow, that their fathers ought to pimp for them? No, no, sir; it is not a father's business to follow his children's inclinations till he makes himself a beggar.

*Fred.* But this is of another nature, my lord.

*Lop.* Look ye, sir; I resolve she shall marry Don Guzman the moment he arrives. Though I could not govern my son, I will my daughter, I assure you.

*Fred.* This match, my lord, is more preposterous than that which you proposed to your son, from whence arose this fatal quarrel. Don Antonio's sister, Elvira, wanted beauty only; but Guzman every thing but——

*Lop.* Money——and that will purchase every thing; and so adieu. [*Exit.*

*Fred.* Monstrous! these are the resolutions which destroy the comforts of matrimony. He is rich and well-born; powerful arguments, indeed! could I but add them to the friendship of Don Felix, what might I not hope? But a merchant and a grandee of Spain are inconsistent names. Lissardo! from whence came you?

*Enter* LISSARDO *in a riding-habit.*

*Lis.* This letter will inform you, sir.

*Fred.* I hope your master's safe?

*Lis.* I left him so; I have another to deliver which requires haste. Your most humble servant, sir. [*Bowing.*

*Fred.* To Violante, I suppose?

*Liss.* The same. [*Exit.*

*Fred.* [*Reads.*] 'Dear Frederick! the two 'chief blessings of this life, are a friend and a 'mistress; to be debarred the sight of those, is 'not to live. I hear nothing of Antonio's death, 'and therefore resolve to venture to thy house 'this evening, impatient to see Violante, and em-'brace my friend. Your's.

FELIX.'

Pray Heaven he comes undiscovered! Ha! Colonel Briton!

*Enter* COLONEL BRITON *in a riding-habit.*

*Col.* Frederick, I rejoice to see thee.

*Fred.* What brought you to Lisbon, colonel?

*Col. La fortune de la guerre,* as the French say. I have commanded these three last years in Spain, but my country has thought fit to strike up a peace, and give us good Protestants leave to hope for christian burial; so I resolved to take Lisbon in my way home.

*Fred.* If you are not provided of a lodging, colonel, pray command my house while you stay.

*Col.* If I were sure I should not be troublesome, I would accept your offer, Frederick.

*Fred.* So far from trouble, colonel, I shall take it as a particular favour. What have we here?

*Col.* My footman: this is our country dress, you must know, which, for the honour of Scotland, I make all my servants wear.

*Enter* GIBBY, *in a highland dress.*

*Gib.* What maun I de with the horses, and like yer honour? They will tack cald gin they stand in the causeway.

*Fred.* Oh, I'll take care of them. What, hoa! Vasquez!

*Enter* VASQUEZ.

Put those horses, which that honest fellow will shew you, into my stable, do you hear, and feed them well.

*Vas.* Yes, sir.——Sir, by my master's orders, I am, sir, your most obsequious humble servant. Be pleased to lead the way.

*Gib.* 'Sbleed! gang your gate, sir; and I sall follow ye. Ise tee hungry to feed on compliments. [*Exit.*

*Fred.* Ha, ha! a comical fellow. Well, how do you like our country, colonel?

*Col.* Why, faith, Frederick, a man might pass his time agreeably enough within side of a nunnery; but to behold such troops of soft, plump, tender, melting, wishing, nay, willing girls, too, through a damned grate, gives us Britons strong temptations to plunder. Ah, Frederick! your priests are wicked rogues; they immure beauty for their own proper use, and shew it only to the laity to create desires, and inflame account, that they may purchase pardons at a dearer rate.

*Fred.* I own wenching is something more difficult here than in England, where womens' liberties are subservient to their inclinations, and husbands seem of no effect but to take care of the children which their wives provide.

*Col.* And does restraint get the better of inclination with your women here? No, I'll be sworn, not even in fourscore. Don't I know the constitution of the Spanish ladies?

*Fred.* And of all the ladies where you come, colonel; you were ever a man of gallantry.

*Col.* Ah, Frederick! the kirk half starves us Scotsmen. We are kept so sharp at home, that we feed like cannibals abroad. Hark ye, hast thou never a pretty acquaintance now that thou wouldst consign over to a friend for half an hour, ha?

*Fred.* Faith, colonel, I am the worst pimp in Christendom; you had better trust to your own luck: the women will soon find you out, I warrant you.

*Col.* Aye, but it is dangerous foraging in an enemy's country; and since I have some hopes of seeing my own again, I had rather purchase my pleasure than run the hazard of a stiletto in my guts. Egad, I think I must e'en marry, and sacrifice my body for the good of my soul. Wilt thou recommend me to a wife, then; one that is willing to exchange her moidores for English liberty? ha, friend?

*Fred.* She must be very handsome, I suppose?

*Col.* The handsomer the better——but be sure she has a nose.

*Fred.* Aye, aye; and some gold.

*Col.* Oh, very much gold; I shall never be able to swallow the matrimonial pill, if it be not well gilded.

*Fred.* Puh! beauty will make it slide down nimbly.

*Col.* At first, perhaps, it may; but the second or third dose will choke me. I confess, Frederick, women are the prettiest play-things in nature; but gold, substantial gold, gives them the air, the mien, the shape, the grace, and beauty of a goddess.

*Fred.* And has not gold the same divinity in their eyes, colonel?

*Col.* Too often—Money is the very god of marriage; the poets dress him in a saffron robe, by which they figure out the golden deity; and his lighted torch blazons those mighty charms which encourage us to list under his banner.

None marry now for love; no, that's a jest:
The self-same bargain serves for wife and beast.

*Fred.* You are always gay, colonel. Come, shall we take a refreshing glass at my house, and consider what has been said?

*Col.* I have two or three compliments to discharge for some friends, and then I shall wait on you with pleasure. Where do you live?

*Fred.* At yon corner-house with the green rails.

*Col.* In the close of the evening, I will endeavour to kiss your hand! Adieu. [*Exit* COL.

*Fred.* I shall expect you with impatience. [*Exit* FRED.

SCENE II.—*A room in* DON LOPEZ'S *house.*

*Enter* ISABELLA, *and* INIS *her maid.*

*Inis.* For goodness sake, madam, where are you going in this pet?

*Isa.* Any where to avoid matrimony. The thoughts of a husband are as terrible to me as the sight of a hobgoblin.

*Inis.* Ay, of an old husband: but if you may choose for yourself, I fancy matrimony would be no such frightful thing to you.

*Isa.* You are pretty much in the right, Inis: but to be forced into the arms of an idiot, a sneaking, snivelling, drivelling, avaricious fool! who has neither person to please the eye, sense to charm the ear, nor generosity to supply those

defects—Ah, Inis! what pleasant lives women lead in England, where duty wears no fetter but inclination! The custom of our country enslaves us from our very cradles, first to our parents, next to our husbands, and, when Heaven is so kind to rid us of both these, our brothers still usurp authority, and expect a blind obedience from us; so that, maids, wives, or widows, we are little better than slaves to the tyrant, man. Therefore, to avoid their power, I resolve to cast myself into a monastery.

*Inis.* That is, you'll cut your own throat to avoid another's doing it for you. Ah, madam! those eyes tell me you have no nun's flesh about you. A monastery, quotha!—where you'll wish yourself into the green-sickness in a month.

*Isa.* What care I? there will be no man to plague me.

*Inis.* No; nor, what's much worse, to please you, neither—Odslife, madam, you are the first woman that ever despaired in a Christian country ——Were I in your place———

*Isa.* Why, what would your wisdom do, if you were?

*Inis.* I'd embark with the first fair wind with all my jewels, and seek my fortune on t'other side the water: no shore can treat you worse than your own. There's ne'er a father in Christendom should make me marry any man against my will.

*Isa.* I am too great a coward to follow your advice. I must contrive some way to avoid Don Guzman, and yet stay in my own country.

*Enter* DON LOPEZ.

*Lop.* Must you so, mistress? but I shall take care to prevent you. [*Aside.*]—Isabella, whither are you going, my child?

*Isa.* Ha! my father!—To church, sir.

*Inis.* The old rogue has certainly overheard her. [*Aside.*

*Lop.* Your devotion must needs be very strong, or your memory very weak, my dear. Why, vespers are over for this night. Come, come; you shall have a better errand to church than to say your prayers there. Don Guzman is arrived in the river, and I expect him ashore to-morrow.

*Isa.* Ha! to-morrow!

*Lop.* He writes me word, that his estate in Holland is worth twelve thousand crowns a-year, which, together with what he had before, will make thee the happiest wife in Lisbon.

*Isa.* And the most unhappy woman in the world. Oh, sir, if I have any power in your heart; if the tenderness of a father be not quite extinct, hear me with patience.

*Lop.* No objection against the marriage, and I will hear whatsoever thou hast to say.

*Isa.* That's torturing me on the rack, and forbidding me to groan. Upon my knees, I claim the privilege of flesh and blood. [*Kneels.*

*Lop.* I grant it; thou shalt have an armful of flesh and blood to-morrow. Flesh and blood, quotha! Heaven forbid I should deny thee flesh and blood, my girl!

*Inis.* Here's an old dog for you! [*Aside.*

*Isa.* Do not mistake, sir. The fatal stroke, which separates soul and body, is not more terrible to the thoughts of sinners, than the name of Guzman to my ear.

*Lop.* Puh, puh! you lie, you lie.

*Isa.* My frighted heart beats hard against my breast, as if it sought a passage to your feet, to beg you'd change your purpose.

*Lop.* A very pretty speech, this! if it were turned into blank verse, it would serve for a tragedy. Why, thou hast more wit than I thought thou hadst, child. I fancy this was all *extempore;* I don't believe thou didst ever think one word on't before.

*Inis.* Yes, but she has, my lord; for I have heard her say the same things a thousand times.

*Lop.* How, how!—What, do you top your second-hand jests upon your father, hussy, who knows better what's good for you than you do yourself? Remember 'tis your duty to obey.

*Isa.* [*Rising.*] I never disobeyed before; and I wish I had not reason now; but nature has got the better of my duty, and makes me loathe the the harsh commands you lay.

*Lop.* Ha, ha! very fine! ha, ha!

*Isa.* Death itself would be more welcome.

*Lop.* Are you sure of that?

*Isa.* I am your daughter, my lord, and can boast as strong a resolution as yourself. I'll die before I'll marry Guzman.

*Lop.* Say you so? I'll try that presently. [*Draws.*] Here, let me see with what dexterity you can breathe a vein now. [*Offers her his sword.*] The point is pretty sharp—'twill do your business, I warrant you.

*Inis.* Bless me, sir! What! do you mean to put a sword into the hands of a desperate woman?

*Lop.* Desperate! ha, ha, ha! you see how desperate she is. What, art thou frighted, little Bell? ha!

*Isa.* I confess I am startled at your morals, sir.

*Lop.* Ay, ay, child; thou hadst better take the man; he'll hurt thee the least of the two.

*Isa.* I shall take neither, sir: Death has many doors; and, when I can live no longer with pleasure, I shall find one to let him in at without your aid.

*Lop.* Say'st thou so, my dear Bell? Ods, I'm afraid thou art a little lunatic, Bell. I must take care of thee, child. [*Takes hold of her, and pulls out of his pocket a key.*] I shall make bold to secure thee, my dear; I'll see if locks and bars can keep thee till Guzman come. Go, get into your chamber:

There I'll your boasted resolution try,
And see who'll get the better, you or I.

[*Pushes her in, and locks the door.*

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A room in* DON PEDRO'S *house.*

*Enter* DONNA VIOLANTE, *reading a letter, and* FLORA *following.*

*Flo.* WHAT, must that letter be read again?

*Vio.* Yes, and again, and again, and again; a thousand times again; a letter from a faithful lover can ne'er be read too often; it speaks such kind, such soft, such tender things——

[*Kisses it.*

*Flo.* But always the same language.

*Vio.* It does not charm the less for that.

*Flo.* In my opinion, nothing charms that does not change: and any composition of the four-and-twenty-letters, after the first essay, from the same hand, must be dull, except a bank-note, or a bill of exchange.

*Vio.* Thy taste is my averson.—[*Reads.*] 'My 'all that's charming, since life's not life, exiled 'from thee, this night shall bring me to thy arms. 'Frederick and thee are all I trust. These six 'weeks' absence, has been, in love's account, six 'hundred years. When it is dark, expect the 'wonted signal at thy window: till when, adieu. 'Thine, more than his own, FELIX.'

*Flo.* Who would not have said as much to a lady of her beauty, and twenty thousand pounds? ——Were I a man, methinks I could have said a hundred finer things.

*Vio.* What would you have said?

*Flo.* I would have compared your eyes to the stars, your teeth to ivory, your lips to coral, your neck to alabaster, your shape to——

*Vio.* No more of your bombast; truth is the best eloquence in a lover.——What proof remains ungiven of his love? When his father threatened to disinherit him for refusing Don Antonio's sister, from whence sprung this unhappy quarrel, did it shake his love for me? and now, though strict inquiry runs through every place, with large rewards to apprehend him, does he not venture all for me?

*Flo.* But you know, madam, your father, Don Pedro, designs you for a nun—to be sure, you look very like a nun!—and says your grandfather left you your fortune upon that condition.

*Vio.* Not without my approbation, girl, when I come to one-and-twenty, as I am informed. But, however, I shall run the risk of that. Go, call in Lissardo.

*Flo.* Yes, madam. Now for a thousand verbal questions! [*Exit.*

*Re-enter with* LISSARDO.

*Vio.* Well, and how do you do, Lissardo?

*Lis.* Ah, very weary, madam.——'Faith, thou look'st wondrous pretty, Flora. [*Aside to* FLORA.

*Vio.* How came you?

*Lis.* En chevalier, madam; upon a hackney jade, which, they told me, formerly belonged to an English colonel; but I should have rather thought she had been bred a good Roman catholic all her lifetime—for she downed on her knees to every stock and stone we came along by.—— My chops water for a kiss; they do, Flora.

[*Aside to* FLORA.

*Flo.* You'd make one believe you are wondrous fond now.

*Lis.* Od, if I had you alone, housewife, I'd shew you how fond I would be— [*Aside to* FLO.

*Vio.* Where did you leave your master?

*Lis.* At a little farm-house, madam, about five miles off. He'll be at Don Frederick's in the evening——Od, I will so revenge myself of those lips of thine— [*To* FLORA.

*Vio.* Is he in health?

*Flo.* Oh, you counterfeit wondrous well.

[*To* LISSARDO.

*Lis.* No; every body knows I counterfeit very ill. [*To* FLORA.

*Vio.* How say you? Is Felix ill? What's his distemper? ha!

*Lis.* A pox on't; I hate to be interrupted.—Love, madam, love——In short, madam, I believe he has thought of nothing but your ladyship ever since he left Lisbon. I am sure he could not, if I may judge of his heart by my own.

[*Looking lovingly upon* FLORA.

*Vio.* How came you so well acquainted with your master's thoughts, Lissardo?

*Lis.* By an infallible rule, madam; words are the pictures of the mind, you know: now, to prove he thinks of nothing but you, he talks of nothing but you.—For example, madam; coming from shooting t'other day with a brace of partridges, Lissardo, said he, go bid the cook roast me these Violantes.——I flew into the kitchen, full of thoughts of thee, cried, Here, cook, roast me these Floras. [*To* FLORA.

*Flo.* Ha, ha! excellent!—You mimic your master, then, it seems?

*Lis.* I can do every thing as well as my master, you little rogue.—Another time, madam, the priest came to make him a visit; he called out hastily, Lissardo, said he, bring a Violante for my father to sit down on.——Then he often mistook my name, madam, and called me Violante: in short, I heard it so often, that it became as familiar to me as my prayers.

*Vio.* You live very merrily, then, it seems?

*Lis.* Oh! exceeding merry, madam.

[*Kisses* FLORA'S *hand.*

*Vio.* Ha! exceeding merry: had you treats and balls?

*Lis.* Oh! yes, yes, madam, several.

*Flo.* You are mad, Lissardo; you don't mind what my lady says to you. [*Aside to* LISSARDO.

*Vio.* Ha! balls—Is he so merry in my absence? And did your master dance, Lissardo?

*Lis.* Dance, madam! where, madam?

*Vio.* Why, at those balls you speak of.

*Lis.* Balls! what balls, madam?

*Vio.* Why, sure you are in love, Lissardo! did not you say, but now, you had balls where you have been?

*Lis.* Balls, madam! Odslife, I ask your pardon, madam! I, I, I, had mislaid some washballs of my master's t'other day; and, because I could not think where I had laid them, just when he asked for them, he very fairly broke my head, madam; and now, it seems, I can think of nothing else. Alas! he dance, madam! No, no, poor gentleman! he is as melancholy as an unbraced drum.

*Vio.* Poor Felix! There, wear that ring for your master's sake, and let him know I shall be ready to receive him. [*Exit* VIOLANTE.

*Lis.* I shall, madam.——[*Puts on the ring.*] Methinks, a diamond ring is a vast addition to the little finger of a gentleman.

[*Admiring his hand.*

*Flo.* That ring must be mine.—Well, Lissardo, what haste you make to pay off arrears now! Look how the fellow stands!

*Lis.* Egad, methinks I have a very pretty hand—and very white—and the shape!—Faith, I never minded it so much before—In my opinion, it is a very fine shaped hand—and becomes a diamond ring as well as the first grandee's in Portugal.

*Flo.* The man's transported! Is this your love, this your impatience?

*Lis.* [*Takes snuff.*] Now, in my mind—I take snuff with a very jantee air——Well, I am persuaded I want nothing but a coach and a title to make me a very fine gentleman. [*Struts about.*

*Flo.* Sweet Mr Lissardo! [*Curtsying.*] if I may presume to speak to you, without affronting your little finger——

*Lis.* Odso, madam, I ask your pardon——Is it to me, or to the ring——you direct your discourse, madam?

*Flo.* Madam! Good lack! how much a diamond ring improves one!

*Lis.* Why, though I say it—I can carry myself as well as any body—But what wert thou going to say, child?

*Flo.* Why, I was going to say, that I fancy you had best let me keep that ring: it will be a very pretty wedding-ring, Lissardo, would it not?

*Lis.* Humph! ah! But—but—but—I believe I shan't marry yet awhile.

*Flo.* You shan't, you say!—Very well! I suppose you design that ring for Inis?

*Lis.* No, no; I never bribe an old acquaintance—Perhaps I might let it sparkle in the eyes of a stranger a little, till we come to a right understanding——but, then, like all other mortal things, it would return from whence it came.

*Flo.* Insolent!—is that your manner of dealing?

*Lis.* With all but thee—Kiss me, you little rogue, you. [*Hugging her.*

*Flo.* Little rogue! Prithee, fellow, don't be so familiar; [*Pushing him away.*] if I mayn't keep your ring, I can keep my kisses.

*Lis.* You can, you say! spoke with the air of a chambermaid.

*Flo.* Replied with the spirit of a serving man.

*Lis.* Prithee, Flora, don't let you and I fall out; I am in a merry humour, and shall certainly fall in somewhere.

*Flo.* What care I where you fall in!

*Enter* VIOLANTE.

*Vio.* Why do you keep Lissardo so long, Flora, when you don't know how soon my father may awake? his afternoon naps are never long.

*Flo.* Had Don Felix been with her, she would not have thought the time long. These ladies consider nobody's wants but their own. [*Aside.*

*Vio.* Go, go; let him out, and bring a candle.

*Flo.* Yes, madam.

*Lis.* I fly, madam. [*Exeunt* LIS. *and* FLORA.

*Vio.* The day draws in, and night, the lover's friend, advances—night, more welcome than the sun to me, because it brings my love.

*Flo.* [*Shrieks within.*] Ah, thieves, thieves! Murder, Murder!

*Vio.* [*Shrieks.*] Ah! defend me, Heaven! What do I hear? Felix is certainly pursued, and will be taken.

*Enter* FLORA, *running.*

*Vio.* How now? why dost stare so? Answer me quickly; what's the matter?

*Flo.* Oh, madam! as I was letting out Lissardo, a gentleman rushed between him and I, struck down my candle, and is bringing a dead person in his arms into our house.

*Vio.* Ha! a dead person! Heaven grant it does not prove my Felix!

*Flo.* Here they are, madam.

*Vio.* I'll retire till you discover the meaning of this accident. [*Exit.*

*Enter* COLONEL, *with* ISABELLA *in his arms; sets her down in a chair, and addresses himself to* FLORA.

*Col.* Madam, the necessity this lady was under of being conveyed into some house with speed and secrecy, will, I hope, excuse any indecency I might be guilty of in pressing so rudely into this—I am an entire stranger to her name and circumstances—would I were so to her beauty, too. [*Aside.*] I commit her, madam, to your care; and fly to make her retreat secure, if the street be clear: permit me to return, and learn, from her own mouth, if I can be further serviceable. Pray, madam, how is the lady of this house called?

*Flo.* Violante, signior——He is a handsome cavalier, and promises well. [*Aside.*

*Col.* Are you she, madam?

*Flo.* Only her woman, signior.

*Col.* Your humble servant, mistress. Pray, be careful of the lady.——

[*Gives her two moidores, and exit.*

*Flo.* Two moidores! Well, he is a generous fellow. This is the only way to make one careful. I find all countries understand the constitution of a chambermaid.

*Enter* VIOLANTE.

*Vio.* Was you distracted, Flora! to tell my name to a man you never saw! Unthinking wench! who knows what this may turn to?—— What, is the lady dead? Ah! defend me, Heaven! 'tis Isabella, sister to my Felix. What has befallen her? Pray Heaven he's safe.—Run and fetch some cold water.—Stay, stay, Flora.—— Isabella, friend, speak to me; Oh! speak to me, or I shall die with apprehension!

*Flo.* See, she revives!

*Isa.* Oh! hold, my dearest father! do not force me; indeed, I cannot love him.

*Vio.* How wild she talks!——

*Isa.* Ha! where am I?

*Vio.* With one as sensible of thy pain, as thou thyself canst be.

*Isa.* Violante! what kind star preserved and lodged me here?

*Flo.* It was a terrestrial star, called a man, madam; pray Jupiter he proves a lucky one!

*Isa.* Oh! I remember now. Forgive me, dear Violante! my thought ran so much upon the danger I escaped, I forgot.

*Vio.* May I not know your story?

*Isab.* Thou are no stranger to one part of it. I have often told thee, that my father designed to sacrifice me to Don Guzman, who, it seems, is just returned from Holland, and expected ashore to-morrow, the day that he has set to celebrate our nuptials. Upon my refusing to obey him, he locked me into my chamber, vowing to keep me there till he arrived, and force me to consent. I know my father to be positive, never to be won from his design; and having no hope left me to escape the marriage, I leaped from the window into the street.

*Vio.* You have not hurt yourself, I hope?

*Isa.* No; a gentleman, passing by accident, caught me in his arms: at first, my fright made me apprehend it was my father, till he assured me to the contrary.

*Flo.* He is a very fine gentlemen, I promise you, madam; and a well-bred man I warrant him. I think I never saw a grandee put his hand into his pocket with a better air in my whole life-time; then he opened his purse with such a grace, that nothing but his manner of presenting me with the gold could equal.

*Vio.* There is but one common road to the heart of a servant, and 'tis impossible for a generous person to mistake it.——Go, leave us, Flora.——But how came you hither, Isabella?

*Isa.* I know not; I desired the stranger to convey me to the next monastery; but, ere I reached the door, I saw, or fancied that I saw, Lissardo, my brother's man; and the thought that his master might not be far off, flung me into a swoon; which is all that I can remember.—Ha! What's here? [*Takes up a letter.*] 'For 'Colonel Briton, to be left at the post-house in 'Lisbon.' This must be dropt by the stranger which brought me hither.

*Vio.* Thou art fallen into the hands of a soldier; take care he does not lay thee under contribution, girl.

*Isa.* I find he is a gentleman; and if he is but unmarried, I could be content to follow him all the world over.—But I shall never see him more, I fear. [*Sighs and pauses.*

*Vio.* What makes you sigh, Isabella?

*Isa.* The fear of falling into my father's clutches again.

*Vio.* Can I be serviceable to you?

*Isa.* Yes, if you conceal me two or three days.

*Vio.* You command my house and secresy.

*Isa.* I thank you, Violante. I wish you would oblige me with Mrs Flora a while.

*Vio.* I'll send her to you.—I must watch if dad be still asleep, or here will be no room for Felix. [*Exit.*

*Isa.* Well, I don't know what ails me; methinks I wish I could find this stranger out.

*Enter* FLORA.

*Flo.* Does your ladyship want me, madam?

*Isa.* Ay, Mrs Flora: I resolve to make you my confidante.

*Flo.* I shall endeavour to discharge my duty, madam.

*Isa.* I doubt it not, and desire you to accept this as a token of my gratitude.

*Flo.* Oh, dear Seniora! I should have been your humble servant without a fee.

*Isa.* I believe it—But to the purpose——Do you think, if you saw the gentleman who brought me hither, you should know him again?

*Flo.* From a thousand, madam; I have an excellent memory, where a handsome man is concerned. When he went away, he said he would return again immediately. I admire he comes not.

*Isa.* Here, did you say? You rejoice me—— though I'll not see him, if he comes. Could not you contrive to give him a letter?

*Flo.* With the air of a duenna——

*Isa.* Not in this house——you must veil and follow him——He must not know it comes from me.

*Flo.* What, do you take me for a novice in love affairs? Though I have not practised the art since I have been in Donna Violante's service, yet I have not lost the theory of a chambermaid—Do you write the letter and leave the

rest to me.———Here, here, here's pen, ink, and paper.

*Isa.* I'll do it in a minute.

[*Sits down to write.*

*Flo.* So! this is a business after my own heart.——Love always takes care to reward his labourers, and Great Britain seems to be his favourite country.——Oh! I long to see the other two moidores with a British air—Methinks there's a grace peculiar to that nation in making a present.

*Isa.* So, I have done. Now, if he does but find this house again!

*Flo.* If he should not—I warrant I'll find him, if he's in Lisbon; for I have a strong prepossession that he has two moidores as good as ever was told. [*Puts the letter into her bosom.*

*Enter* VIOLANTE.

*Vio.* Flora, watch my papa; he's fast asleep in his study: if you find him stir, give me notice. [*Colonel taps at the window.*] Hark, I hear Felix at the window! admit him instantly, and then to your post. *Exit* FLORA.

*Isa.* What say you, Violante! is my brother come?

*Vio.* It is his signal at the window.

*Isa.* [*Kneels.*] Oh, Violante! I conjure you by all the love thou bearest to Felix, by thy own generous nature, nay, more, by that unspotted virtue thou art mistress of, do not discover to my brother I am here.

*Vio.* Contrary to your desire, be assured I never shall. But where's the danger?

*Isa.* Art thou born in Lisbon, and ask that question! He'll think his honour blemished by my disobedience, and would restore me to my father, or kill me; therefore, dear, dear girl!—

*Vio.* Depend upon my friendship; nothing shall draw the secret from these lips; not even Felix, though at the hazard of his love. I hear him coming; retire into that closet.

*Isa.* Remember, Violante, upon thy promise my very life depends. [*Exit.*

*Vio.* When I betray thee, may I share thy fate!

*Enter* FELIX.

My Felix, my everlasting love!

[*Runs into his arms.*

*Fel.* My life! my soul! my Violante!

*Vio.* What hazards dost thou run for me? Oh, how shall I requite thee?

*Fel.* If during this tedious painful exile, thy thoughts have never wandered from thy Felix, thou hast made me more than satisfaction.

*Vio.* Can there be room within this heart for any but thyself? No; if the god of love were lost to all the rest of human-kind, thy image would secure him in my breast: I am all truth, all love, all faith, and know no jealous fears.

*Fel.* My heart's the proper sphere where love resides: could he quit that, he would be no where found; and yet, Violante, I'm in doubt.

*Vio.* Did I ever give thee cause to doubt, my Felix?

*Fel.* True love has many fears, and Fear as many eyes as Fame; yet sure, I think they see no fault in thee. [*Colonel taps again.*] What's that?

[*Taps again.*

*Vio.* What? I heard nothing. [*Again.*

*Fel.* Ha! What means this signal at your window?

*Vio.* Somewhat perhaps, in passing by, might accidentally hit it; it can be nothing else.

*Col.* [*Within.*] Hist, hist! Donna Violante! Donna Violante!

*Fel.* They use your name by accident too, do they, madam?

*Enter* FLORA.

*Flo.* There is a gentleman at the window, madam, whom I fancy to be him who brought Isabella hither. Shall I admit him?

[*Aside to* VIOLANTE.

*Vio.* Admit distraction rather! Thou art the cause of this, unthinking wretch!

[*Aside to* FLORA.

*Fel.* What, has Mrs Scout brought you fresh intelligence? Death! I'll know the bottom of this immediately. [*Offers to go.*

*Flo.* Scout! I scorn your words, senior.

*Vio.* Nay, nay, nay! you must not leave me.

[*Runs and catches hold of him.*

*Fel.* Oh! 'tis not fair not to answer the gentleman, madam; it is none of his fault that his visit proves unseasonable. Pray let me go; my presence is but a restraint upon you.

[*Struggles to get from her. The Col. pats again.*]

*Vio.* Was ever accident so mischievous!

[*Aside.*

*Flo.* It must be the colonel——Now to deliver my letter to him!

[*Exit. The* COL. *taps louder.*

*Fel.* Hark! he grows impatient at your delay.—Why do you hold the man whose absence would oblige you? Pray, let me go, madam. Consider the gentleman wants you at the window. Confusion! [*Struggles still.*

*Vio.* It is not me he wants.

*Fel.* Death! not you! Is there another of your name in the house? But come on, convince me of the truth of what you say; open the window; if his business does not lie with you, your conversation may be heard. This, and only this, can take off my suspicion.—What, do you pause? Oh, guilt, guilt!—Have I caught you? Nay, then, I'll leap the balcony. If I remember, this way leads to it. [*Breaks from her, and goes to the door where* ISABLLLA *is.*

*Vio.* Oh, heaven! what shall I do now! Hold, hold, hold, hold; not for the world—you enter

there. Which way shall I preserve his sister from his knowledge? [*Aside.*

*Fel.* What, have I touched you? Do you fear your lover's life?

*Vio.* I fear for none but you.—For goodness' sake, do not speak so loud, my Felix! If my father hear you, I am lost for ever; that door opens into his apartment.——What shall I do, if he enters? There he finds his sister.—If he goes out, he'll quarrel with the stranger.——Felix, Felix!———Nay, do not struggle to be gone, my Felix.——If I open the window, he may discover the whole intrigue; and yet, of all evils, we ought to chuse the least.——Your curiosity shall be satisfied. [*Goes to the window, and throws up the sash.*] Whoe'er you are, that, with such insolence, dare use my name, and give the neighbourhood pretence to reflect upon my conduct, I charge you instantly to be gone; or expect the treatment you deserve.

*Col.* I ask pardon, madam, and will obey: but when I left this house to-night———

*Fel.* Good!

*Vio.* It is, most certainly, the stranger. What will be the event of this, Heaven knows! [*Aside.*] You are mistaken in the house, I suppose, sir?

*Fel.* No, no; he's not mistaken.——Pray, madam, let the gentleman go on.

*Vio.* Wretched misfortune! Pray, begone, sir; I know of no business you have here.

*Col.* I wish I did not know it neither——But this house contains my soul; then, can you blame my body for hovering about it?

*Fel.* Excellent!

*Vio.* Distraction! he will infallibly discover Isabella.—I tell you again you are mistaken; however, for your own satisfaction, call to-morrow.

*Fel.* Matchless impudence! an assignation before my face!—No, he shall not live to meet your wishes.

[*Takes out a pistol, and goes towards the window. She catches hold of him.*

*Vio.* Ah! [*Shrieks.*] Hold, I conjure you!

*Col.* To-morrow's an age, madam! may I not be admitted to-night?

*Vio.* If you be a gentleman, I command your absence.——Unfortunate! what will my stars do with me? [*Aside.*

*Col.* I have done——only this——be careful of my life; for it is in your keeping.

[*Exit from the window.*

*Fel.* Pray, observe the gentleman's request, madam. [*Walking off from her.*

*Vio.* I am all confusion. [*Aside.*

*Fel.* You are all truth, all love, all faith! oh, thou all woman!——How have I been deceived?———'Sdeath! could you not have imposed upon me for this one night? Could neither my faithful love, nor the hazard I have run to see you, make me worthy to be cheated on? Oh, thou———

*Vio.* Can I bear this from you! [*Weeps.*

*Fel.* [*Repeats.*] When I left this house to-night——To-night! the devil! return so soon!

*Vio.* Oh, Isabella! what hast thou involved me in! [*Aside.*

*Fel.* [*Repeats.*[ This house contains my soul.

*Vio.* Yet I resolve to keep the secret. [*Aside.*

*Fel.* [*Repeats.*] Be careful of my life; for it is in your keeping.——Damnation!——How ugly she appears! [*Looking at her.*

*Vio.* Do not look so sternly on me; but believe me, Felix, I have not injured you; nor am I false.

*Fel.* Not false! not injured me! Oh, Violante! lost and abandoned to thy vice! Not false! Oh, monstrous!

*Vio.* Indeed, I am not.—There is a cause which I must not reveal.——Oh, think, how far honour can oblige your sex—then allow a woman may be bound by the same rule to keep a secret.

*Fel.* Honour! what hast thou to do with honour, thou that canst admit plurality of lovers? A secret! ha, ha, ha! his affairs are wondrous safe, who trusts his secret to a woman's keeping. But you need give yourself no trouble about clearing this point, madam; for you are become so indifferent to me, that your truth and falsehood are the same.

*Vio.* My love! [*Offers to take his hand.*

*Fel.* My torment! [*Turns from her.*

*Flo.* So, I have delivered my letter to the colonel, and received my fee. [*Aside.*] Madam, your father bade me see what noise that was.—For goodness sake, sir, why do you speak so loud?

*Fel.* I understand my cue, mistress; my absence is necessary; I'll oblige you.

[*Going, she takes hold of him.*

*Vio.* Oh, let me undeceive you first!

*Fel.* Impossible!

*Vio.* 'Tis very possible, if I durst.

*Fel.* Durst! ha, ha, ha! Durst, quotha!

*Vio.* But another time, I'll tell thee all.

*Fel.* Nay, now or never———

*Vio.* Now it cannot be.

*Fel.* Then it shall never be—Thou most ungrateful of thy sex, farewell!

[*Breaks from her, and exit.*

*Vio.* Oh, exquisite trial of my friendship! Yet, not even this shall draw the secret from me.

That I'll preserve, let fortune frown or smile;
And trust to love my love to reconcile. [*Exit.*

## ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A chamber in* DON LOPEZ'S *house.*

*Enter* DON LOPEZ.

*Lop.* Was ever man thus plagued? Odsheart, I could swallow my dagger for madness. I know not what to think: sure Frederick had no hand in her escape.——She must get out of the window; and she could not do that, without a ladder; and who could bring it to her but him? Ay, it must be so. The dislike he shewed to Don Guzman, in our discourse to-day, confirms my suspicion; and I will charge him home with it. Sure children were given me for a curse! Why, what innumerable misfortunes attend us parents! when we have employed our whole care to educate and bring our children up to years of maturity, just when we expect to reap the fruits of our labour, a man shall, in the tinkling of a bell, see one hanged, and t'other whored. This graceless baggage!—But I'll to Frederick immediately; I'll take the Alguazil with me, and search his house; and if I find her, I'll use her——by St Anthony, I don't know how I'll use her!

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to the Street.*

*Enter* COLONEL *with* ISABELLA'S *letter in his hand, and* GIBBY *following.*

*Col.* Well, though I could not see my fair incognita, Fortune, to make me amends, has flung another intrigue in my way. Oh, how I love these pretty, kind, coming females, that won't give a man the trouble of racking his invention to deceive them.——Oh, Portugal! thou dear garden of pleasure—where love drops down his mellow fruit, and every bough bends to our hands, and seems to cry, Come, pull, and eat! how deliciously a man lives here, without fear of the stool of repentance!—This letter I received from a lady in a veil——some duenna, some necessary implement of Cupid, I suppose. The style is frank and easy; I hope, like her that writ it. [*Reads.*] 'Sir, I have seen your person, and like 'it;'—very concise!—'and if you'll meet me at 'four o'clock in the morning, upon the *Terriero* 'de passa, half an hour's conversation will let me 'into your mind.'—Ha, ha, ha! a philosophical wench! This is the first time I ever knew a woman had any business with the mind of a man! —'If your intellects answer your outward appearance, the adventure may not displease you. 'I expect you'll not attempt to see my face, nor 'offer any thing unbecoming the gentleman I 'take you for.'——Humph, the gentleman she takes me for! I hope she takes me to be flesh and blood, and then I'm sure I shall do nothing unbecoming a gentleman. Well, if I must not see her face, it shall go hard if I don't know where she lives.——Gibby!

*Gib.* Here, an like yer honour.

*Col.* Follow me at a good distance; do you hear, Gibby?

*Gib.* In troth dee I, weel eneugh, sir.

*Col.* I am to meet a lady upon the *Terriero de passa.*

*Gib.* The deel an mine eyn gin I ken her, sir.

*Col.* But you will, when you come there, sirrah.

*Gib.* Like eneugh, sir; I have as sharp an eye tull a bonny lass, as ere a lad in aw Scotland. And what mun I dee wi' her, sir?

*Col.* Why if she and I part, you must watch her home, and bring me word where she lives.

*Gib.* In troth sall I, sir, gin the deel tak her not.

*Col.* Come along, then; it is pretty near the time.—I like a woman that rises early to pursue her inclination.

Thus we improve the pleasures of the day,
While tasteless mortals sleep their time away.

[*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to* FREDERICK'S *house.*

*Enter* INIS *and* LISSARDO.

*Lis.* Your lady run away, and you know not whither, say you?

*Inis.* She never greatly cared for me, after finding you and I together. But you are very grave, methinks, Lissardo.

*Lis.* [*Looking on the ring.*] Not at all—I have some thoughts, indeed, of altering my course of living: there is a critical minute in every man's life, which if he can but lay hold of, he may make his fortune.

*Inis.* Ha! what do I see? a diamond ring! Where the deuce had he that ring?——You have got a very pretty ring there, Lissardo?

*Lis.* Ay, the trifle is pretty enough——but the lady who gave it to me is a *bona roba* in beauty, I assure you. [*Cocks his hat, and struts.*

*Inis.* I can't bear this.——The lady! what lady, pray?

*Lis.* O fy! there's a question to ask a gentleman!

*Inis.* A gentleman! why, the fellow's spoiled! Is this your love for me? Ungrateful man! you'll break my heart; so you will. [*Bursts into tears.*

*Liss.* Poor tender-hearted fool!——

*Inis.* If I knew who gave you that ring, I'd tear her eyes out; so I would. [*Sobs.*

*Lis.* So, now, the jade wants a little coaxing. Why, what dost weep for now, my dear? ha!

*Inis.* I suppose Flora gave you that ring; but I'll——

*Lis.* No; the devil take me if she did! you make me swear now.——So, they are all for the ring; but I shall bob them.——I did but joke; the ring is none of mine; it is my master's; I am to give it to be new set, that's all; therefore, pr'ythee, dry thy eyes, and kiss me; come.

*Enter* FLORA.

*Inis.* And do you really speak truth now?

*Lis.* Why, do you doubt it?

*Flo.* So, so; very well! I thought there was an intrigue between him and Inis, for all he has forsworn it so often. [*Aside.*

*Inis.* Nor ha'nt you seen Flora since you came to town?

*Flo.* Ha! how dares she name my name? [*Aside.*

*Lis.* No, by this kiss I ha'nt. [*Kisses her.*

*Flo.* Here's a dissembling varlet! [*Aside.*

*Inis.* Nor don't you love her at all?

*Lis.* Love the devil! Why, did I not always tell thee she was my aversion?

*Flo.* Did you so, villain?

[*Strikes him a box on the ear.*

*Lis.* Zounds, she here! I have made a fine spot of work on't. [*Aside.*

*Inis.* What's that for? ha! [*Brushes up to her.*

*Flo.* I shall tell you by and by, Mrs Frippery, if you don't get about your business.

*Inis.* Who do you call Frippery, Mrs Trollop?—Pray get about your business, if you go to that. I hope you pretend to no right and title here?

*Lis.* What the devil! do they take me for an acre of land, that they quarrel about right and title to me? [*Aside.*

*Flo.* Pray, what right have you, mistress, to ask that question?

*Inis.* No matter for that; I can show a better title to him than you, I believe.

*Flo.* What, has he given thee nine months earnest for a living title? ha, ha!

*Inis.* Don't fling your flaunting jests to me, Mrs Boldface, for I won't take them, I assure you.

*Lis.* So! now I am as great as the famed Alexander. But, my dear Statira and Roxana, don't exert yourselves so much about me. Now, I fancy if you would agree lovingly together, I might, in a modest way, satisfy both your demands upon me.

*Flo.* You satisfy! No, sirrah; I am not to be satisfied so soon as you think, perhaps.

*Inis.* No, nor I, neither.—What! do you make no difference between us?

*Flo.* You pitiful fellow you! What! you fancy, I warrant, I gave myself the trouble of dogging you out of love to your filthy person; but you are mistaken, sirrah—it was to detect your treachery.———How often have you sworn to me, that you hated Inis, and only carried fair for the good cheer she gave you; but that you could never like a woman with crooked legs, you said?

*Inis.* How, how, sirrah? crooked legs! Ods, I could find in my heart——

[*Snatching up her petticoat a little.*

*Lis.* Here's a lying young jade now! pr'ythee, my dear, moderate thy passion. [*Coaxingly.*

*Inis.* I'd have you to know, sirrah, my legs were never——Your master, I hope, understands legs better than you do, sirrah. [*Passionately.*

*Lis.* My master! so, so!

[*Shaking his head, and winking.*

*Flo.* I am glad I have done some mischief, however. [*Aside.*

*Lis.* [*To* INIS.] Art thou really so foolish to mind what an enraged woman says? Don't you see she does it on purpose to part you and I?—[*Runs to* FLORA]. Could not you find the joke, without putting yourself in a passion, you silly girl you? Why, I saw you follow us plain enough, mun, and said all this, that you might not go back with only your labour for your pains.—But you are a revengeful young slut though, I tell you that; but come, kiss and be friends.

*Flo.* Don't think to coax me; hang your kisses!

*Fel.* [*Within.*] Lissardo!

*Lis.* Ods-heart, here's my master! The devil take both these jades for me! What shall I do with them?

*Inis.* Ha! 'tis Don Felix's voice! I would not have him find me here with his footman for the world. [*Aside.*

*Fel.* [*Within.*] Why, Lissardo, Lissardo!

*Lis.* Coming sir. What a pox will you do!

*Flo.* Bless me, which way shall I get out?

*Lis.* Nay, nay, you must e'en set your quarrel aside, and be content to be mewed up in this clothes-press together, or stay where you are and face it out—there is no help for it.

*Flo.* Put me any where rather than that; come, come; let me in.

[*He opens the press, and she goes in.*

*Inis.* I'll see her hanged before I'll go into the place where she is.—I'll trust fortune with my deliverance. Here us'd to be a pair of back stairs, I'll try to find them out. [*Exit* INIS.

*Enter* FELIX *and* FREDERICK.

*Fel.* Was you asleep, sirrah, that you did not hear me call?

*Lis.* I did hear you, and answered you I was coming, sir.

*Fel.* Go, get the horses ready; I'll leave Lisbon to-night, never to see it more.

*Lis.* Hey-day! what's the matter now?

[*Exit* LISSARDO.

*Fred.* Pray, tell me, Don Felix, what has ruffled your temper thus?

*Fel.* A woman—Oh, friend! who can name woman, and forget inconstancy!

*Fred.* This, from a person of mean education, were excuseable; such low suspicions have their source from vulgar conversation; men of your

politer taste never rashly censure.—Come, this is some groundless jealousy.—Love raises many fears.

*Fel.* No, no; my ears conveyed the truth into my heart, and reason justifies my anger. Oh, my friend! Violante's false, and I have nothing left but thee in Lisbon which can make me wish ever to see it more, except revenge upon my rival, of whom I'm ignorant. Oh, that some miracle would reveal him to me, that I might, through his heart, punish her infidelity!

*Enter* LISSARDO.

*Lis.* Oh, sir! here's your father, Don Lopez, coming up.

*Fel.* Does he know that I am here?

*Lis.* I can't tell, sir: he ask'd for Don Frederick.

*Fred.* Did he see you?

*Lis.* I believe not, sir; for as soon as I saw him I ran back to give my master notice.

*Fel.* Keep out of his sight then—and dear Frederick, permit me to retire into the next room; for I know the old gentleman will be very much displeased at my return without his leave.

[*Exit* FELIX.

*Fred.* Quick, quick; begone, he is here.

*Enter Don* LOPEZ, *speaking as he enters.*

*Lop.* Mr Alguazil, wait you without, till I call for you. Frederick, an affair brings me here—which—requires privacy—so that, if you have any body within ear-shot, pray order them to retire.

*Fred.* We are private, my lord; speak freely.

*Lop.* Why then, sir, I must tell you, that you had better have pitched upon any man in Portugal to have injured than myself.

*Fel.* [*Peeping.*] What means my father?

*Fred.* I understand you not, my lord.

*Lop.* Though I am old, I have a son—Alas! why name I him? He knows not the dishonour of my house.

*Fel.* I am confounded! The dishonour of his house!

*Fred.* Explain yourself, my lord: I am not conscious of any dishonourable action to any man, much less to your lordship.

*Lop.* 'Tis false; you have debauched my daughter.

*Fel.* Debauched my sister! impossible! he could not, durst not, be that villain.

*Fred.* My lord, I scorn so foul a charge.

*Lop.* You have debauched her duty at least; therefore, instantly restore her to me, or, by St Anthony, I'll make you.

*Fred.* Restore her, my lord! where shall I find her?

*Lop.* I have those that will swear she is here in your house.

*Fel.* Ha! in this house?

*Fred.* You are misinformed, my lord! Upon my reputation, I have not seen Donna Isabella since the absence of Don Felix.

*Lop.* Then pray, sir—if I am not too inquisitive, what motive had you for those objections you made against her marriage with don Guzman yesterday?

*Fred.* The disagreeableness of such a match, I feared, would give your daughter cause to curse her duty, if she complied with your demands; that was all, my lord.

*Lop.* And so you helped her through the window, to make her disobey?

*Fel.* Ha, my sister gone! Oh, scandal to our blood!

*Fred.* This is insulting me, my lord, when I assure you I have neither seen nor know any thing of your daughter.——If she is gone, the contrivance was her own, and you may thank your rigour for it.

*Lop.* Very well, sir; however, my rigour shall make bold to search your house. Here, call in the Alguazil——

*Flo.* [*Peeping.*] The Alguazil! What, in the name of wonder, will become of me?

*Fred.* The Alguazil! My lord, you'll repent this.

*Enter* ALGUAZIL, *and Attendants.*

*Lop.* No, sir; 'tis you that will repent it. I charge you in the king's name to assist me in finding my daughter. Be sure you leave no part of the house unsearched. Come, follow me.

[*Gets towards the door where* FELIX *is:* FREDERICK *draws, and plants himself before the door.*

*Fred.* Sir, I must first know by what authority you pretend to search my house before you enter here.

*Alg.* How, sir! dare you presume to draw your sword upon the representative of majesty? I am, sir, I am his majesty's alguazil, and the very quintessence of authority—therefore, put up your sword, or I shall order you to be knocked down—for know, sir, the breath of an alguazil is as dangerous as the breath of a demi-culverin.

*Lop.* She is certainly in that room, by his guarding the door. If he disputes your authority, knock him down, I say.

*Fred.* I shall shew you some sport first. The woman you look for is not here; but there is something in this room which I'll preserve from your sight at the hazard of my life.

*Lop.* Enter, I say; nothing but my daughter can be there. Force his sword from him.

[FELIX *comes out, and joins* FREDERICK.

*Fel.* Villains, stand off! assassinate a man in his own house!

*Lop.* Oh, oh, misericordia! what do I see? my son!

*Alg.* Ha, his son! Here's five hundred pounds good, my brethren, if Antonio dies; and that's in

the surgeon's power—and he's in love with my daughter, you know—so seize him——Don Felix, I command you to surrender yourself into the hands of justice, in order to raise me and my posterity; and, in consideration you lose your head to gain me five hundred pounds, I'll have your generosity recorded on your tombstone—at my own proper cost and charge—I hate to be ungrateful.

*Lop.* Hold, hold! Oh that ever I was born!

*Fred.* Did I not tell you, you would repent, my lord? What, hoa! within there.

*Enter Servants.*

Arm yourselves, and let not a man in nor out but Felix.

*Fel.* Generous Frederick!

*Fred.* Look ye, alguazil, when you would betray my friend for filthy lucre, I shall no more regard you as an officer of justice, but, as a thief and robber, thus resist you.

*Fel.* Come on, sir; we'll shew you play for the five hundred pounds.

*Alg.* Fall on; seize the money, right or wrong, ye rogues. [*They fight.*

*Lop.* Hold, hold, alguazil! I'll give you the five hundred pounds, that is, my bond to pay upon Antonio's death, and twenty pistoles, however things go, for you and these honest fellows to drink my health.

*Alg.* Say you so, my lord? Why look ye, my lord; I bear the young gentleman no ill will, my lord. If I get but the five hundred pounds, my lord——why look ye, my lord; 'tis the same thing to me, whether your son be hanged or not, my lord.

*Fel.* Scoundrels!

*Lop.* Aye, well, thou art a good-natured fellow, that's the truth on't. Come, then, we'll to the tavern, and sign and seal this minute. Oh, Felix! why wouldst thou serve me thus? But I cannot upbraid thee now, nor have I time to talk. Be careful of thyself, or thou wilt break my heart.

[*Exeunt* LOPEZ, *alguazil, and attendants.*

*Fel.* Now, Frederick, though I ought to thank you for your care of me, yet till I am satisfied as to my father's accusation, for I overheard it all, I can't return the acknowledgments I owe you. Know you aught relating to my sister?

*Fred.* I hope my faith and truth are known to you——and here, by both I swear, I am ignorant of every thing relating to your father's charge.

*Fel.* Enough, I do believe thee. Oh Fortune! where will thy malice end?

*Enter* VASQUEZ.

*Vas.* Sir, I bring you joyful news.

*Fel.* What's the matter?

*Vas.* I am told that Don Antonio is out of danger, and now in the palace.

*Fel.* I wish it be true; then I'm at liberty to watch my rival, and pursue my sister. Prithee, Frederick, inform thyself of the truth of this report.

*Fred.* I will, this minute. Do you hear? let nobody in to Don Felix till my return.

[*Exit* FRED.

*Vas.* I'll observe, sir. [*Exit* VAS.

*Flo.* [*Peeping.*] They have almost frighted me out of my wits, I'm sure. Now Felix is alone, I have a good mind to pretend I came with a message from my lady; but how then shall I say I came into the cupboard?

*Enter* VASQUEZ, *seeming to oppose the entrance of somebody.*

*Vas.* I tell you, madam, Don Felix is not here.

*Vio.* [*Within.*] I tell you, sir, he is here, and I will see him.

*Fel.* What noise is that?

*Vio.* [*Breaking in.*] You are as difficult of access, sir, as a first minister of state.

*Flo.* My stars, my lady here!

[*Shuts the press close.*

*Fel.* If your visit was designed for Frederick, madam, he is abroad.

*Vio.* No, sir, the visit is to you.

*Fel.* You are very punctual in your ceremonies, madam.

*Vio.* Though I did not come to return your visit, but to take that which your civility ought to have brought me.

*Fel.* If my eyes, my ears, and my understanding lied, then I am in your debt; else not, madam.

*Vio.* I will not charge them with a term so gross, to say they lied; but call it a mistake; nay, call it any thing to excuse my Felix.—— Could I, think ye, could I put off my pride so far, poorly to dissemble a passion which I did not feel, or seek a reconciliation with what I did not love? Do but consider, if I had entertained another, should I not rather embrace this quarrel, pleased with the occasion that rid me of your visits, and gave me freedom to enjoy the choice which you think I have made? Have I any interest in thee but my love? or am I bound by aught but inclination to submit and follow thee?—No law, whilst single, binds us to obey—but your sex are, by nature and education, obliged to pay a deference to all womankind.

*Fel.* These are fruitless arguments. 'Tis most certain thou wert dearer to these eyes than all that Heaven e'er gave to charm the sense of man; but I would rather tear them out than suffer them to delude my reason and enslave my peace.

*Vio.* Can you love without esteem? and where is the esteem for her you still suspect? Oh, Felix, there is a delicacy in love, which equals even a religious faith! True love never doubts the object it adores, and sceptics there will disbelieve their sight.

*Fel.* Your notions are too refined for mine, madam.

*Enter* VASQUEZ.

How now, sirrah, what do you want?

*Vas.* Only my master's cloak out of this press, sir; that's all.

*Fel.* Make haste, then.

*Vas.* [*Opens the press, sees* FLORA, *and roars out.*] Oh, the devil, the devil! [*Exit.*

*Flo.* Discovered! nay, then, legs befriend me. [*Runs out.*

*Vio.* Ha! a woman concealed! very well, Felix.

*Fel.* A woman in the press!

*Enter* LISSARDO.

How the devil came a woman there, sirrah?

*Lis.* What shall I say now?

*Vio.* Now, Lissardo, shew your wit to bring your master off.

*Lis.* Off, madam——Nay, nay, nay—there, there needs no great wit to, to, to bring them off, madam; for she did, and she did not come, as, as, as, a, a, a, man may say directly to, to, to, to, to speak with my master, madam.

*Vio.* I see by your stammering, Lissardo, that your invention is at a very low ebb.

*Fel* 'Sdeath! rascal, speak without hesitation, and the truth, too, or I shall stick my spado in your guts.

*Vio.* No, no; your master mistakes; he would not have you speak the truth.

*Fel.* Madam, my sincerity wants no excuse.

*Lis.* I am so confounded between one and the other, that I cannot think of a lie. [*Aside.*

*Fel.* Sirrah, fetch me this woman back instantly—I'll know what business she has here.

*Vio.* Not a step; your master shall not be put to the blush. Come, a truce, Felix. Do you ask me no more questions about the window, and I'll forgive this.

*Fel.* I scorn forgiveness, where I own no crime; but your soul, conscious of its guilt, would fain lay hold of this occasion, to blend your treason with my innocence.

*Vio.* Insolent! Nay, if, instead of owning your fault, you endeavour to insult my patience, I must tell you, sir, you don't behave yourself like that man of honour you would be taken for; you ground your quarrel with me upon your own inconstancy; 'tis plain you are false yourself, and would make me the aggressor. It was not for nothing the fellow opposed my entrance. This last usage has given me back my liberty; and now my father's will shall be obeyed, without the least reluctance; and so your servant.

[*Exit* VIOLANTE.

*Fel.* Oh, stubborn, stubborn heart! what wilt thou do? Her father's will shall be obeyed! Ha! that carries her to a cloister, and cuts off all my hopes at once. By Heaven, she shall not, must not leave me! No, she is not false——at least my love now represents her true, because I fear to lose her. Ha! villain, art thou here?—[*Turns upon* LISSARDO.]—Tell me, this moment, who this woman was, and for what intent she was here concealed—or——

*Lis.* Aye, good sir! forgive me, and I'll tell you the whole truth. [*Falls on his knees.*

*Fel.* Out with it, then——

*Lis.* It, it, it was Mrs Flora, sir, Donna Violante's woman. You must know, sir, we have had a sneaking kindness for one another a great while—She was not willing you should know it; so, when she heard your voice, she ran into the clothes-press. I would have told you this at first, but I was afraid of her lady's knowing it. This is the truth, as I hope for a whole skin, sir.

*Fel.* If it be not, I'll not leave you a whole bone in it, sirrah. Fly, and observe if Violante goes directly home.

*Lis.* Yes, sir, yes.

*Fel.* Fly, you dog, fly!—[*Exit* LISSARDO.]—I must convince her of my faith. Oh, how irresolute is a lover's heart! My resentment cooled, when hers grew high—nor can I struggle longer with my fate; I cannot quit her; no, I cannot, so absolute a conquest has she gained. How absolute is woman's power!

In vain we strive their tyranny to quit,
In vain we struggle, for we must submit.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*The Terriero de Passa.*

*Enter* COLONEL, *and* ISABELLA *veiled.* GIBBY *at a distance.*

*Col.* Then you say it is impossible for me to wait on you home, madam?

*Isa.* I say it is inconsistent with my circumstances, colonel—and, that way, impossible for me to admit of it.

*Col.* Consent to go with me, then. I lodge at one Don Frederick's, a merchant, just by here.—He is a very honest fellow, and I dare confide in his secrecy.

*Isa.* Ha! does he lodge there? Pray Heaven I am not discovered! [*Aside.*

*Col.* What say you, my charmer? Shall we breakfast together? I have some of the best tea in the universe.

*Isa.* Puh! tea! is that the best treat you can give a lady at your lodgings, colonel?

*Col.* Well hinted——No, no, no; I have other things at thy service, child.

*Isa.* What are those things, pray?

*Col.* My heart, soul, and body, into the bargain.

*Isa.* Has the last no incumbrance upon it? can you make a clear title, colonel?

*Col.* All freehold, child, and I'll afford thee a very good bargain. [*Embraces her.*

*Gib.* O' my saul, they mak muckle words about

it. Ise sare weary with standing—Ise e'en tak a sleep. [*Lies down.*

*Isa.* If I take a lease, it must be for life, colonel.

*Col.* Thou shalt have me as long, or as little time, as thou wilt, my dear. Come, let's to my lodgings, and we'll sign and seal this minute.

*Isa.* Oh, not so fast, colonel—There are many things to be adjusted before the lawyer and the parson come.

*Col.* The lawyer and parson! No, no, you little rogue; we can finish our affairs without the help of the law—or the gospel.

*Isa.* Indeed but we cannot, colonel.

*Col.* Indeed! Why, hast thou then trepanned me out of my warm bed this morning, for nothing? Why, this is shewing a man half famished, a well-furnished larder, then clapping a padlock on the door, till you starve him quite.

*Isa.* If you can find in your heart to say grace, colonel, you shall keep the key.

*Col.* I love to see my meat before I give thanks, madam; therefore, uncover thy face, child, and I'll tell thee more of my mind——If I like you——

*Isa.* I dare not risk my reputation upon your ifs, colonel; and so adieu! [*Going.*

*Col.* Nay, nay, nay; we must not part.

*Isa.* As you ever hope to see me more, suspend your curiosity now; one step farther loses me for ever. Shew yourself a man of honour, and you shall find me a woman of honour.

[*Exit* ISABELLA.

*Col.* Well, for once I'll trust to a blind bargain, madam—[*Kisses her hand, and parts.*]——But I shall be too cunning for your ladyship, if Gibby observes my orders. Methinks, these intrigues, which relate to the mind, are very insipid. The conversation of bodies is much more diverting. Ha! What do I see? My rascal asleep! Sirrah, did not I charge you to watch the lady? And is it thus ye observe my orders, ye dog?

[*Kicks him all this while, and he shrugs, and rubs his eyes, and yawns.*]

*Gib.* That's true, an like yer honour; but I thought, that when yence ye had her in yer ane hands, ye might a' ordered her yer sel weel eneugh without me, en ye ken, an like yer honour.

*Col.* Sirrah, hold your impertinent tongue, and make haste after her. If you don't bring me some account of her, never dare to see my face again. [*Exit.*

*Gib.* Aye, this is bony wark indeed! To run three hundred mile to this wicked town, and before I can weel fill my weam, to be sent a whore-hunting after this black she devil. What gate sal I gang to speer for this wutch now? Ah, for a ruling elder—or the kirk's treasurer—or his mon—I'd gar my master mak twa o' this—But I am sure there's na sick honest people here, or there wud na be sa mickle sculdudrie.

*Enter an English soldier, passing along.*

*Gib.* Geud mon, did you see a woman, a lady, ony gate hereawa e'en now?

*Eng.* Yes, a great many. What kind of a woman is it you inquire after?

*Gib.* Geud troth, she's na kenspeckle; she's aw in a cloud——

*Eng.* What! 'Tis some Highland monster which you brought over with you, I suppose: I see no such, not I. Kenspeckle, quotha!

*Gib.* Huly, huly, mon; the deel pike out yer een, and then ye'll see the better, ye Portigise tike.

*Eng.* What says the fellow?

[*Turning to* GIBBY.

*Gib.* Say! I say I am a better fallow than e'er stude upon yer shanks—and gin I heer mair o' yer din, deel o' my saul, sir, but Ise crack yer croon.

*Eng.* Get you gone, you Scotch rascal, and thank your heathen dialect, which I don't understand, that you han't your bones broke.

*Gib.* Aye, an ye dinna understand a Scotsman's tongue, I'se see gin ye can understand a Scotsman's gripe. Wha's the better mon now, sir?

[*Lays hold of him, strikes up his heels, and gets astride over him.*]

*Here* VIOLANTE *crosses the stage,* GIBBY *jumps up from the man, and brushes up to* VIOLANTE.

*Gib.* I vow, madam, but I am glad that ye and I are foregathered.

*Vio.* What would the fellow have?

*Gib.* Nothing: away, madam! wo worth yer heart, what a muckle deal o' mischief had you like to bring upon poor Gibby!

*Vio.* The man's drunk——

*Gib.* In troth, am I not——And gin I had na found ye, madam, the laird knows when I should; for my maister bad me ne'er gang hame without tidings of ye, madam.

*Vio.* Sirrah! get about your business, or I'll have your bones drubbed.

*Gib.* Geud faith! my maister has e'en done that t' yer honds, madam.

*Vio.* Who is your master, sir?

*Gib.* Mony a ane speers the gate they ken right weel: it is no sa lang sen ye parted wi' him. I wish he ken ye half as weel as ye ken him.

*Vio.* Pugh! the creature's mad, or mistakes me for somebody else; and I should be as mad as he to talk to him any longer.

[VIOLANTE *enters* DON PEDRO'S *house.*

*Enter* LISSARDO *at the upper end of the stage.*

*Lis.* So, she's gone home, I see. What did that Scots fellow want with her? I'll try to find it out; perhaps I may discover something that may make my master friends with me again.

*Gib.* Are ye gone, madam? a deel scope in

yer company, for I'm as wise as I was. But I'll bide and see wha's house it is, gin I can meet with ony civil body to speer at.——Weel, of aw men in the warld, I think our Scotsmen the greatest feuls, to leave their weel-favoured honest women at hame, to rin walloping after a pack of gyrearlings here, that shame to shew their faces, and peur men, like me, are forced to be their pimps. A pimp! Godswarbit, Gibby's ne'er be a pimp—and yet, in troth, it's a triving trade: I remember a countrymon o' my ane, that, by ganging o' sick like errands as I am now, came to get preferment. My lad, wot ye wha lives here?

[*Turns and sees* LISSARDO.

*Lis.* Don Pedro de Mendosa.

*Gib.* And did you see a lady gang in but now?

*Lis.* Yes, I did.

*Gib.* And d' ye ken her tee?

*Lis.* It was Donna Violante, his daughter. What the devil makes him so inquisitive? Here is something in it, that is certain. [*Aside.*]—'Tis a cold morning, brother; what think you of a dram?

*Gib.* In troth, very weel, sir.

*Lis.* You seem an honest fellow; prithee, let's drink to our better acquaintance.

*Gib.* Wi' aw my heart, sir; gang your get to the next house, and Ise follow ye.

*Lis.* Come along, then. [*Exit.*

*Gib.* Don Pedro de Mendosa!—Donna Violante, his daughter!—that's as reight as my leg now——Ise need na mare; I'll tak a drink, and then to my maister———

Ise bring him news will mak his heart full blee;
Gin he rewards it not, deel pimp for me.

[*Exit.*

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.—VIOLANTE's *lodgings.*

*Enter* ISABELLA *in a gay temper, and* VIOLANTE *out of humour.*

*Isa.* My dear! I have been seeking you this half hour, to tell you the most lucky adventure!

*Vio.* And you have pitched upon the most unlucky hour for it, that you could possibly have found in the whole four-and-twenty.

*Isa.* Hang unlucky hours! I won't think of them; I hope all my misfortunes are past.

*Vio.* And mine all to come.

*Isa.* I have seen the man I like.

*Vio.* And I have seen the man that I could wish to hate.

*Isa.* And you must assist me in discovering whether he can like me or not.

*Vio.* You have assisted me in such a discovery already, I thank ye.

*Isa.* What say you, my dear?

*Vio.* I say I am very unlucky at discoveries, Isabella; I have too lately made one pernicious to my ease; your brother is false.

*Isa.* Impossible!

*Vio.* Most true.

*Isa.* Some villain has traduced him to you.

*Vio.* No, Isabella; I love too well to trust the eyes of others: I never credit the ill-judging world, or form suspicions upon vulgar censures; no, I had ocular proof of his ingratitude.

*Isa.* Then I am most unhappy. My brother was the only pledge of faith betwixt us; if he has forfeited your favour, I have no title to your friendship.

*Vio.* You wrong my friendship, Isabella; your own merit entitles you to every thing within my power.

*Isa.* Generous maid! But may I not know what grounds you have to think my brother false?

*Vio.* Another time.—But tell me, Isabella, how can I serve you?

*Isa.* Thus, then—The gentleman that brought me hither, I have seen and talked with upon the Terriero de Passa this morning, and I find him a man of sense, generosity, and good humour; in short, he is every thing that I could like for a husband; and I have dispatched Mrs Flora to bring him hither: I hope you'll forgive the liberty I have taken.

*Vio.* Hither! to what purpose?

*Isa.* To the great universal purpose—matrimony.

*Vio.* Matrimony! why, do you design to ask him?

*Isa.* No, Violante, you must do that for me.

*Vio.* I thank you for the favour you design me, but desire to be excused; I manage my own affairs too ill to be trusted with those of other people; besides, if my father should find a stranger here, it might make him hurry me into a monastery immediately. I can't, for my life, admire your conduct, to encourage a person altogether unknown to you.——'Twas very imprudent to meet him this morning, but much more so to send for him hither, knowing what inconveniency you have already drawn upon me.

*Isa.* I am not insensible how far my misfortunes have embarrassed you; and, if you please, sacrifice my quiet to your own.

*Vio.* Unkindly urged! Have I not preferred your happiness to every thing that's dear to me?

*Isa.* I know thou hast—then, do not deny me this last request, when a few hours, perhaps, may render my condition able to clear thy fame, and bring my brother to thy feet for pardon.

*Vio.* I wish you don't repent of this intrigue. I suppose he knows you are the same woman that he brought in here last night?

*Isa.* Not a syllable of that; I met him veiled,

and, to prevent his knowing the house, I ordered Mrs Flora to bring him by the back-door into the garden.

*Vio.* The very way which Felix comes! if they should meet, there would be fine work.—Indeed, my dear, I can't approve of your design.

*Enter* FLORA.

*Flo.* Madam, the colonel waits your pleasure.

*Vio.* How durst you go upon such a message, mistress, without acquainting me?

*Flo.* So! I am to be huffed for every thing!

*Isa.* 'Tis too late to dispute that now, dear Violante; I acknowledge the rashness of the action—but consider the necessity of my deliverance.

*Vio.* That, indeed, is a weighty consideration: well, what am I to do?

*Isa.* In the next room I'll give you instructions. In the mean time, Mrs Flora, shew the colonel into this.

[*Exit* FLORA *one way, and* ISABELLA *and* VIOLANTE *another.*

*Re-enter* FLORA *with the* COLONEL.

*Flo.* The lady will wait on you presently, sir. [*Exit.*

*Col.* Very well—This is a very fruitful soil. I have not been here quite four-and-twenty hours, and I have three intrigues upon my hands already; but I hate the chase, without partaking of the game———

*Enter* VIOLANTE, *veiled.*

Ha! a fine sized woman!—pray Heaven she proves handsome!—I am come to obey your ladyship's commands.

*Vio.* Are you sure of that, colonel?

*Col.* If you be not very unreasonable indeed, madam. A man is but a man.

[*Takes her hand, and kisses it.*

*Vio.* Nay, we have no time for compliments, colonel.

*Col.* I understand you, madam—*Montrez moi votre chambre.* [*Takes her in his arms.*

*Vio.* Nay, nay; hold, colonel; my bed-chamber is not be entered, without a certain purchase.

*Col.* Purchase! humph, this is some kept mistress, I suppose, who industriously lets out her leisure hours. [*Aside.*]—Look ye, madam, you must consider we soldiers are not overstocked with money—but we make ample satisfaction in love; we have a world of courage upon our hands now, you know—then, prithee use a conscience, and I'll try if my pocket can come up to your price.

*Vio.* Nay, don't give yourself the trouble of drawing your purse, colonel; my design is levelled at your person, if that be at your own disposal.

*Col.* Aye, that it is, faith, madam! and I'll settle it as firmly upon thee——

*Vio.* As law can do it.

*Col.* Hang law in love affairs! thou shalt have right and title to it, out of pure inclination.—A matrimonial hint again! Gad! I fancy the women have a project on foot to transplant the union into Portugal! [*Aside.*

*Vio.* Then you have an aversion to matrimony, colonel? Did you never see a woman in all your travels, that you could like for a wife?

*Col.* A very odd question! Do you really expect that I should speak truth now?

*Vio.* I do, if you expect to be dealt with, colonel.

*Col.* Why, then——Yes.

*Vio.* Is she in your country, or this?

*Col.* This is a very pretty kind of a catechism! but I don't conceive which way it turns to edification.—In this town, I believe, madam.

*Vio.* Her name is——

*Col.* Aye, how is she called, madam?

*Vio.* Nay, I ask you that, sir.

*Col.* Oh, ho! why, she is called——Pray, madam, how is it you spell your name?

*Vio.* Oh, colonel, I am not the happy woman, nor do I wish it.

*Col.* No! I'm sorry for that.——What the devil does she mean by all these questions? [*Aside.*

*Vio.* Come, colonel, for once be sincere—perhaps you may not repent it.

*Col.* This is like to be but a silly adventure, here's so much sincerity required. [*Aside.*]——Faith, madam, I have an inclination to sincerity; but I'm afraid you'll call my manners in question.

*Vio.* Not at all; I prefer truth before compliment in this affair.

*Col.* Why, then, to be plain with you, madam, a lady last night wounded my heart by a fall from a window, whose person I could be content to take, as my father took my mother, till death do us part——but who she is, or how distinguished, whether maid, wife, or widow, I can't inform you; perhaps you are she.

*Vio.* Not to keep you in suspense, I am not she—but I can give you an account of her. That lady is a maid of condition——has ten thousand pounds—and, if you are a single man, her person and fortune are at your service.

*Col.* I accept the offer with the highest transports; but say, my charming angel! art thou not she? [*Offers to embrace her.*]—This is a lucky adventure! [*Aside.*

*Vio.* Once, again, colonel, I tell you I am not she—but at six this evening you shall find her on the Terriero de Passa, with a white handkerchief in her hand. Get a priest ready, and you know the rest.

*Col.* I shall infallibly observe your directions, madam.

*Enter* FLORA *hastily, and whispers* VIOLANTE, *who starts, and seems surprised.*

*Vio.* Ha! Felix crossing, say you? What shall I do now?

*Col.* You seem surprised, madam?

*Vio.* Oh, colonel, my father is coming hither—and if he find you here, I am ruined.

*Col.* Odslife, madam, thrust me any where. Can't I go out this way?

*Vio.* No, no, no; he comes that way. How shall I prevent their meeting? Here, here; step into my bed-chamber——

*Col.* Oh, the best place in the world, madam!

*Vio.* And be still, as you value her you love. Don't stir till you've notice, as ever you hope to have her in your arms.

*Col.* On that condition, I'll not breathe.

[*Exit* COLONEL.

*Enter* FELIX.

*Fel.* I wonder where this dog of a servant is all this while—But she is at home, I find—How coldly she regards me!——You look, Violante, as if the sight of me were troublesome to you.

*Vio.* Can I do otherwise, when you have the assurance to approach me after what I saw to-day?

*Fel.* Assurance! rather call it good-nature, after what I heard last night. But such regard to honour have I in my love to you, I cannot bear to be suspected, nor suffer you to entertain false notions of my truth, without endeavouring to convince you of my innocence—So much good-nature have I more than you, Violante.——Pray, give me leave to ask your woman one question: my man assures me she was the person you saw at my lodgings.

*Flo.* I confess it, madam, and ask your pardon.

*Vio.* Impudent baggage! not to undeceive me sooner: what business could you have there?

*Fel.* Lissardo and she, it seems, imitate you and I.

*Flo* I love to follow the example of my betters, madam.

*Fel.* I hope I am justified——

*Vio.* Since we are to part, Felix, there needs no justification.

*Fel.* Methinks you talk of parting as a thing indifferent to you. Can you forget how I have loved?

*Vio.* I wish I could forget my own passion, I should with less concern remember yours.—But for mistress Flora——

*Fel.* You must forgive her——Must, did I say? I fear I have no power to impose, though the injury was done to me.

*Vio.* 'Tis harder to pardon an injury done to what we love, than to ourselves; but, at your request, Felix, I do forgive her. Go watch my father, Flora, lest he should awake and surprise us.

*Flo.* Yes, madam. [*Exit* FLORA.

*Fel.* Dost thou then love me, Violante?

*Vio.* What need of repetition from my tongue, when every look confesses what you ask?

*Fel.* Oh, let no man judge of love but those who feel it: what wondrous magic lies in one kind look!——One tender word destroys a lover's rage, and melts his fiercest passion into soft complaint. Oh, the window, Violante! wouldst thou but clear that one suspicion!

*Vio.* Prithee, no more of that, my Felix; a little time shall bring thee perfect satisfaction.

*Fel.* Well, Violante, on condition you think no more of a monastery, I'll wait with patience for this mighty secret.

*Vio.* Ah, Felix! love generally gets the better of religion in us women. Resolutions, made in the heat of passion, ever dissolve upon reconciliation.

*Enter* FLORA, *hastily.*

*Flo.* Oh! madam, madam, madam! my lord, your father, has been in the garden, and locked the back-door, and comes muttering to himself this way.

*Vio.* Then we are caught! Now, Felix, we are undone!

*Fel.* Heavens forbid! This is most unlucky! Let me step into your bed-chamber, he won't look under the bed; there I may conceal myself.

[*Runs to the door, and pushes it open a little.*]

*Vio.* My stars! if he goes in there, he'll find the colonel!—No, no, Felix, that's no safe place: my father often goes thither, and should you cough or sneeze, we are lost.

*Fel.* Either my eye deceived me, or I saw a man within; I'll watch him close.

*Flo.* Oh, invention, invention!—I have it, madam. Here, here, sir; off with your sword, and I'll fetch you a disguise. [*Exit.*

*Fel.* She shall deal with the devil, if she conveys him out without my knowledge.

*Vio.* Bless me, how I tremble!

*Enter* FLORA, *with a riding-hood.*

*Flo.* Here, sir, put on this.

*Fel.* Ay, ay; any thing to avoid Don Pedro.

[*She puts it on.*

*Vio.* Oh, quick, quick! I shall die with apprehension.

*Flo.* Be sure you don't speak a word.

*Fel.* Not for the Indies——but I shall observe you closer than you imagine. [*Aside.*

*Ped.* [*Within.*] Violante, where are you, child?

*Enter* DON PEDRO.

Why, how came the garden door open?—Ha! how now, who have we here?

*Vio.* Humph!—he'll certainly discover him. [*Aside.*

*Flo.* 'Tis my mother, an't please you, sir.

[*She and* FELIX *both curtsey.*

*Ped.* Your mother! by St Andrew, she's a strapper! why, you are a dwarf to her.——How many children have you, good woman?

*Vio.* Oh, if he speaks, we are lost! [*Aside.*

*Flo.* Oh, dear signior, she cannot hear you; she has been deaf these twenty years.

*Ped.* Alas, poor woman!—Why, you muffle her up as if she were blind, too.

*Fel.* Would I were fairly off! [*Aside.*

*Ped.* Turn up her hood.

*Vio.* Undone for ever!———St Anthony forbid! Oh, sir, she has the dreadfullest unlucky eyes——Pray, don't look upon them; I made her keep her hood shut on purpose.——Oh, oh, oh, oh!

*Ped.* Eyes!——Why, what's the matter with her eyes?

*Flo.* My poor mother, sir, is much afflicted with the colic; and, about two months ago, she had it grievously in her stomach, and was overpersuaded to take a dram of filthy English Geneva———which immediately flew up into her head, and caused such a defluxion in her eyes, that she could never since bear the day-light.

*Ped.* Say you so?——Poor woman!——Well, make her sit down, Violante, and give her a glass of wine.

*Vio.* Let her daughter give her a glass below, sir:——For my part, she has frighted me so, I shan't be myself these two hours——I am sure her eyes are evil eyes.

*Fel.* Well hinted.

*Ped.* Well, well; do so.——Evil eyes! there are no evil eyes, child.

*Flo.* Come along, mother—[*Speaks loud.*]—

[*Exeunt* FELIX *and* FLORA.

*Vio.* I'm glad he's gone. [*Aside.*

*Ped.* Hast thou heard the news, Violante?

*Vio.* What news, sir?

*Ped.* Why, Vasquez tells me, that Don Lopez' daughter, Isabella, is run away from her father! that lord has very ill fortune with his children.—Well, I'm glad my daughter has no inclination to mankind, that my house is plagued with no suitors. [*Aside.*

*Vio.* This is the first word ever I heard of it! I pity her frailty———

*Ped.* Well said, Violante.——Next week, I intend thy happiness shall begin.

*Enter* FLORA.

*Vio.* I don't intend to stay so long, thank you, papa. [*Aside.*

*Ped.* My lady Abbess writes word she longs to see thee, and has provided every thing in order for thy reception.——Thou wilt lead a happy life, my girl——fifty times before that of matrimony——where an extravagant coxcomb might make a beggar of thee, or an ill-natured surly dog break thy heart.

*Flo.* Break her heart! she had as good have her bones broke, as to be a nun; I am sure I had rather of the two. You are wondrous kind, sir: but, if I had such a father, I know what I would do.

*Ped.* Why, what would you do, minx, ha?

*Flo.* I would tell him I had as good a right and title to the law of nature, and the end of the creation, as he had.

*Ped.* You would, mistress! who the devil doubts it?—A good assurance is a chamber-maid's coat of arms, and lying and contriving the supporters.——Your inclinations are on tip-toe, it seems.——If I were your father, housewife, I'd have a penance enjoined you so strict, that you should not be able to turn you in your bed for a month.—You are enough to spoil your lady, housewife, if she had not abundance of devotion.

*Vio.* Fy, Flora! are you not ashamed to talk thus to my father?——You said, yesterday, you would be glad to go with me into the monastery.

*Flo.* Did I! I told a great lie, then.

*Ped.* She go with thee! no, no; she's enough to debauch the whole convent.——Well, child, remember what I said to thee: next week——

*Vio.* Ay; and what I am to do this, too. [*Aside.*] I am all obedience, sir; I care not how soon I change my condition.

*Flo.* But little does he think what change she means. [*Aside.*

*Ped.* Well said, Violante!—I am glad to find her so willing to leave the world; but it is wholly owing to my prudent management. Did she know that she might command her fortune when she came at age, or upon day of marriage, perhaps she'd change her note.——But I have always told her, that her grandfather left it with this proviso, that she turned nun. Now, a small part of this twenty thousand pounds provides for her in the nunnery, and the rest is my own.——There is nothing to be got in this life without policy.—[*Aside.*]—Well, child, I am going into the country for two or three days, to settle some affairs with thy uncle; and, when I return, we'll proceed for thy happiness, child.——Good bye, Violante; take care of thyself.

[*Exeunt* DON PEDRO *and* VIOLANTE.

*Flo.* So, now for the colonel!——Hist, hist, colonel!

*Enter* COLONEL.

*Col.* Is the coast clear?

*Flo.* Yes, if you can climb; for you must get over the washhouse, and jump from the garden-wall into the street.

*Col.* Nay, nay; I don't value my neck, if my incognita answers but thy lady's promise.

[*Exeunt* COL. *and* FLO.

*Enter* FELIX.

*Fel.* I have lain perdue under the stairs till I watched the old man out. [VIOLANTE *opens the door.*] 'Sdeath! I am prevented. [*Exit* FELIX.

*Enter* VIOLANTE.

*Vio.* Now to set my prisoner at liberty. [*Goes*

*to the door, where the colonel is hid.*] Sir, sir, you may appear.

*Enter* FELIX, *following her.*

*Fel.* May he so, madam? I had cause for my suspicion, I find. Treacherous woman!

*Vio.* Ha, Felix here! Nay, then, all is discovered.

*Fel.* [*Draws.*] Villain! whoever thou art, come out, I charge thee, and take the reward of thy adulterous errand.

*Vio.* What shall I say?—Nothing but the secret, which I have sworn to keep, can reconcile this quarrel. [*Aside.*

*Fel.* A coward! Nay, then, I'll fetch you out; think not to hide thyself: no; by St Anthony, an altar should not protect thee; even there, I'd reach thy heart, though all the saints were armed in thy defence. [*Exit* FEL.

*Vio.* Defend me, Heaven! what shall I do? I must discover Isabella, or here will be murder!

*Enter* FLORA.

*Flo.* I have helped the colonel off clear, madam.

*Vio.* Sayest thou so, my girl?——Then, I am armed.

*Re-enter* FELIX.

*Fel.* Where has the devil, in compliance to your sex, conveyed him from my resentment?

*Vio.* Him! whom do you mean, my dear inquisitive spark? Ha, ha, ha, ha! you will never leave these jealous whims.

*Fel.* Will you never cease to impose upon me?

*Vio.* You impose upon yourself, my dear. Do you think I did not see you? Yes, I did, and resolved to put this trick upon you.

*Fel.* Trick?

*Vio.* Yes, trick! I knew you'd take the hint, and soon relapse into your wonted error. How easily your jealousy is fired! I shall have a blessed life with you.

*Fel.* Was there nothing in it, then, but only to try me?

*Vio.* Won't you believe your eyes?

*Fel.* My eyes! No, nor my ears, nor any of my senses, for they have all deceived me.—Well, I am convinced that faith is as necessary in love as in religion; for, the moment a man lets a woman know her conquest, he resigns his senses, and sees nothing but what she would have him.

*Vio.* And as soon as that man finds his love returned, she becomes as errant a slave as if she had already said after the priest.

*Fel.* The priest, Violante, would dissipate those fears which cause those quarrels. When wilt thou make me happy?

*Vio.* To-morrow I will tell thee: my father is gone for two or three days to my uncle's; we have time enough to finish our affairs.—But, prithee leave me now, lest some accident should bring my father.

*Fel.* To-morrow, then——

Fly swift, ye hours, and bring to-morrow on!
But I must leave you now, my Violante.

*Vio.* You must, my Felix. We soon shall meet to part no more!

*Fel.* Oh, rapturous sounds! Charming woman!

Thy words and looks have filled my heart
With joy, and left no room for jealousy.
Do thou, like me, each doubt and fear remove,
And all to come be confidence and love.
[*Exit* FEL.

*Enter* ISABELLA.

*Isa.* I am glad my brother and you are reconciled, my dear; and the colonel escaped without his knowledge; I was frighted out of my wits when I heard him return. I know not how to express my thanks, woman, for what you suffered for my sake; my grateful acknowledgement shall ever wait you, and to the world proclaim the faith, truth, and honour of a woman.

*Vio.* Prithee, don't compliment thy friend, Isabella. You heard the colonel, I suppose?

*Isa.* Every syllable; and am pleased to find I do not love in vain.

*Vio.* Thou has caught his heart, it seems, and an hour hence may secure his person. Thou hast made hasty work on't, girl.

*Isa.* From thence I draw my happiness; we shall have no accounts to make up, after consummation.

She who for years protracts her lover's pain,
And makes him wish, and wait, and sigh in vain,
To be his wife, when late she gives consent,
Finds half his passion was in courtship spent;
Whilst they, who boldly all delays remove,
Find every hour a fresh supply of love.
[*Exeunt.*

## ACT V.

SCENE I.—FREDERICK'S *house.*

*Enter* FELIX *and* FREDERICK.

*Fel.* This hour has been propitious; I am reconciled to Violante, and you assure me Antonio is out of danger.

*Fred.* Your satisfaction is doubly mine.

*Enter* LISSARDO.

*Fel.* What haste you made, sirrah, to bring me word if Violante went home!

*Lis.* I can give you very good reasons for my stay, sir. Yes, sir, she went home.

*Fred.* Oh! your master knows that, for he has been there himself, Lissardo.

*Lis.* Sir, may I beg the favour of your ear?

*Fel.* What have you to say?

[*Whispers, and* FELIX *seems uneasy.*

*Fred.* Ha! Felix changes colour at Lissardo's news! What can it be?

*Fel.* A Scots footman, that belongs to colonel Briton, an acquaintance of Frederick's, say you? The devil! if she be false, by Heaven I'll trace her. Prithee, Frederick, do you know one colonel Briton, a Scotsman?

*Fred.* Yes; why do you ask me?

*Fel.* Nay, no great matter; but my man tells me that he has had some little differences with a servant of his, that's all.

*Fred.* He is a good, harmless, innocent fellow: I am sorry for it. The colonel lodges in my house; I knew him formerly in England, and met him here by accident last night, and gave him an invitation home. He is a gentleman of good estate, besides his commission; of excellent principles, and strict honour, I assure you.

*Fel.* Is he a man of intrigue?

*Fred.* Like other men, I suppose. Here he comes.

*Enter* COLONEL.

Colonel, I began to think I had lost you.

*Col.* And not without some reason, if you knew all.

*Fel.* There's no danger of a fine gentleman's being lost in this town, sir.

*Col.* That compliment don't belong to me, sir; but, I assure you, I have been very near being run away with.

*Fred.* Who attempted it?

*Col.* Faith, I know not—only, that she is a charming woman; I mean as much as I saw of her.

*Fel.* My heart swells with apprehension—— some accidental encounter?

*Fred.* A tavern, I suppose, adjusted the matter?

*Col.* A tavern! no, no, sir; she's above that rank, I assure you; this nymph sleeps in a velvet bed, and lodgings every way agreeable.

*Fel.* Ha! a velvet bed! I thought you said but now, sir, you knew her not.

*Col.* No more I don't, sir.

*Fel.* How came you, then, so well acquainted with her bed?

*Fred.* Aye, aye, come, come, unfold.

*Col.* Why, then, you must know, gentlemen, that I was conveyed to her lodgings by one of Cupid's emissaries, called a chambermaid, in a chair, through fifty blind alleys, who, by the help of a key, let me into a garden.

*Fel.* 'Sdeath! a garden! this must be Violante's garden.

[*Aside.*

*Col.* From thence conducted me into a spacious room, then dropt me a curtsey; told me her lady would wait on me presently; so, without unveiling, modestly withdrew.

*Fel.* Damn her modesty! this was Flora.

[*Aside.*

*Fred.* Well, how then, colonel?

*Col.* Then, sir, immediately from another door issued forth a lady, armed at both eyes, from whence such showers of darts fell around me, that had I not been covered with the shield of another beauty, I had infallibly fallen a martyr to her charms; for, you must know, I just saw her eyes—Eyes! did I say? no, no, hold; I saw but one eye, though I suppose it had a fellow equally as killing.

*Fel.* But how came you to see her bed, sir?—'Sdeath! this expectation gives a thousand racks.

[*Aside.*

*Col.* Why, upon her maid's giving notice her father was coming, she thrust me into the bed-chamber.

*Fel.* Upon her father's coming!

*Col.* Aye, so she said; but putting my ear to the key-hole of the door, I found it was another lover.

*Fel.* Confound the jilt! 'twas she without dispute. [*Aside.*

*Fred.* Ah, poor colonel! Ha, ha, ha!

*Col.* I discovered they had had a quarrel, but whether they were reconciled or not I can't tell; for the second alarm brought her father in good earnest, and had like to have made the gentleman and I acquainted, but she found some other stratagem to convey him out.

*Fel.* Contagion seize her, and make her body ugly as her soul! There is nothing left to doubt of now—'Tis plain 'twas she. Sure he knows me, and takes this method to insult me. 'Sdeath! I cannot bear it. [*Aside.*

*Fred.* So, when she had dispatched her old lover, she paid you a visit in her bed-chamber—ha! colonel?

*Col.* No, pox take the impertinent puppy! he spoiled my diversion; I saw her no more.

*Fel.* Very fine! Give me patience, Heaven, or I shall burst with rage! [*Aside.*

*Fred.* That was hard.

*Col.* Nay, what was worse—But, sir, dear sir, do hearken to this: [*To* FELIX.] The nymph that introduced me, conveyed me out again over the top of a high wall, where I ran the danger of having my neck broke, for the father, it seems, had locked the door by which I entered.

*Fel.* That way I missed him. Damn her invention!—[*Aside.*]—Pray, colonel—Ha, ha, ha! 'tis very pleasant, ha, ha, ha! Was this the same lady you met upon the Terriero de Passa this morning?

*Col.* Faith, I cannot tell, sir; I had a design to know who that lady was; but my dog of a footman, whom I had ordered to watch her home, fell fast asleep. I gave him a good beating for his neglect, and I have never seen the rascal since.

*Fred.* Here he comes.

*Enter* GIBBY.

*Col.* Where have you been, sirrah?

*Gib.* Troth, Ise been seeking ye, an like yer honour, these twa hoors and mair. I bring ye glad teedings, sir.

*Col.* What! Have you found the lady?

*Gib.* Geud faith ha I, sir—and she is called Donna Violante, and her parent Don Pedro de Mendosa; and, gin ye will gang wi' me, an like yer honour, Ise mak ye ken the hoose right weel.

*Fel.* Oh, torture! torture! [*Aside.*

*Col.* Ha! Violante! that's the lady's name of the house where my incognita is: sure, it could not be her; at least, it was not the same house, I'm confident. [*Aside.*

*Fred.* Violante! 'tis false; I would not have you credit him, colonel.

*Gib.* The deel burst my bladder, sir, gin I lee.

*Fel.* Sirrah, I say you do lie, and I'll make you eat it, you dog;—[*Kicks him.*]—and, if your master will justify you——

*Col.* Not I, faith, sir——I answer for nobody's lies but my own: if you please, kick him again.

*Gib* But gin he does, Ise na tak it, sir, gin he was a thousand Spaniards.

[*Walks about in a passion.*

*Col.* I owed you a beating, sirrah, and I'm obliged to this gentleman for taking the trouble off my hands; therefore, say no more: d'ye hear, sir? [*Aside to* GIBBY.

*Gib.* Troth de I, sir, and feel tee.

*Fred.* This must be a mistake, colonel; for I know Violante perfectly well, and I am certain she would not meet you upon the Terriero de Passa.

*Col.* Don't be too positive, Frederick: now I have some reasons to believe it was that very lady.

*Fel* You'd very much oblige me, sir, if you'd let me know these reasons.

*Col.* Sir!

*Fel.* Sir, I say I have a right to inquire into these reasons you speak of.

*Col.* Ha, ha! Really, sir, I cannot conceive how you, or any man, can have a right to inquire into my thoughts.

*Fel.* Sir, I have a right to every thing that relates to Violante—and he that traduces her fame, and refuses to give his reasons for't, is a villain.

[*Draws.*

*Col.* What the devil have I been doing? now, blisters on my tongue by dozens! [*Aside.*

*Fred.* Prithee, Felix, don't quarrel till you know for what: this is all a mistake, I'm positive.

*Col.* Look ye, sir; that I dare draw my sword, I think, will admit of no dispute. But, though fighting's my trade, I'm not in love with it, and think it more honourable to decline this business, than pursue it. This may be a mistake: however, I'll give you my honour never to have any affair, directly or indirectly, with Violante, provided she is your Violante; but, if there should happen to be another of her name, I hope you would not engross all the Violante's in the kingdom?

*Fel.* Your vanity has given me sufficient reasons to believe I'm not mistaken. I'll not be imposed upon, sir.

*Col.* Nor I be bullied, sir.

*Fel.* Bullied! 'Sdeath! such another word, and I'll nail thee to the wall.

*Col.* Are you sure of that, Spaniard? [*Draws.*

*Gib.* [*Draws.*]—Say na mair, mon. O' my saul, here's twa to twa. Dinna fear, sir; Gibby stonds by ye, for the honour of Scotland.

[*Vapours about.*

*Fred.* By St Anthony, you shan't fight—[*Interposes.*]—on bare suspicion: be certain of the injury, and then——

*Fel.* That I will, this moment; and then, sir—I hope you are to be found——

*Col.* Whenever you please, sir.

[*Exit* FELIX.

*Gib.* 'Sbleed, sir! there ne'er was a Scotsman yet, that shamed to shew his face.

[*Strutting about.*

*Fred.* So, quarrels spring up like mushrooms, in a minute. Violante and he were but just reconciled, and you have furnished him with fresh matter for falling out again; and I am certain, colonel, Gibby is in the wrong.

*Gib.* Gin I be, sir, the mon that told me, leed; and, gin he did, the deel be my landlord, hell my winter-quarters, and a rape my winding-sheet, gin I dee not lick him as lang as I can haud a stick in my hond, now see ye.

*Col.* I am sorry for what I have said, for the lady's sake: but who could divine that she was his mistress? Prithee, who is this warm spark?

*Fred.* He is the son of one of our grandees, named Don Lopez de Pimentell, a very honest gentleman, but something passionate in what relates to his love. He is an only son, which may, perhaps, be one reason for indulging his passion.

*Col.* When parents have but one child, they either make a madman or a fool of him.

*Fred.* He is not the only child; he has a sister; but I think, through the severity of his father, who would have married her against her inclination, she has made her escape, and, notwithstanding he has offered five hundred pounds, he can get no tidings of her.

*Col.* Ha! How long has she been missing?

*Fred.* Nay, but since last night, it seems.

*Col.* Last night! The very time! How went she?

*Fred.* Nobody can tell; they conjecture through the window.

*Col.* I'm transported! This must be the lady I caught. What sort of a woman is she?

*Fred.* Middle-sized, a lovely brown, a fine pouting lip, eyes that roll and languish, and seem to speak the exquisite pleasure her arms could give.

*Col.* Oh! I am fired with this description——'tis the very she. What's her name?

*Fred.* Isabella.——You are transported, colonel.

*Col.* I have a natural tendency in me to the flesh, thou knowest, and who can hear of charms so exquisite, and yet remain unmoved?——Oh, how I long for the appointed hour! I'll to the Terriero de Passa, and wait my happiness: if she fails to meet me, I'll once more attempt to find her at Violante's, in spite of her brother's jealousy.—[*Aside.*]—Dear Frederick! I beg your pardon; but I had forgot I was to meet a gentleman upon business, at five: I'll endeavour to dispatch him, and wait on you again as soon as possible.

*Fred.* Your humble servant, colonel.

[*Exit* FREDERICK.

*Col.* Gibby, I have no business with you at present. [*Exit* COLONEL.

*Gib.* That's weel. Now will I gang and seek this loon, and gar him gang with me to Don Pedro's house. Gin he'll no gang of himself, Ise gar him gang by the lug, sir. Godswarbit! Gibby hate's a leer. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* VIOLANTE'S *lodgings.*

*Enter* VIOLANTE *and* ISABELLA.

*Isa.* The hour draws on, Violante, and now my heart begins to fail me; but I resolve to venture for all that.

*Vio.* What, does your courage sink, Isabella?

*Isa.* Only the force of resolution a little retreated; but I'll rally it again, for all that.

*Enter* FLORA.

*Flo.* Don Felix is coming up, madam.

*Isa.* My brother! Which way shall I get out? Dispatch him as soon as you can, dear Violante.

[*Exit* ISABELLA *into the closet.*

*Vio.* I will.

*Enter* FELIX, *in a surly humour.*

Felix, what brings you home so soon? Did I not say to-morrow?

*Fel.* My passion chokes me; I cannot speak.—Oh, I shall burst!

[*Aside. Throws himself into a chair.*

*Vio.* Bless me! Are you not well, my Felix?

*Fel.* Yes—no—I don't know what I am.

*Vio.* Hey-day! What's the matter, now? Another jealous whim!

*Fel.* With what an air she carries it! I sweat at her impudence. [*Aside.*

*Vio.* If I were in your place, Felix, I'd choose to stay at home when these fits of spleen are upon me, and not trouble such persons as are not obliged to bear with them.

[*Here he affects to be careless of her.*

*Fel.* I am very sensible, madam, of what you mean: I disturb you, no doubt; but, were I in a better humour, I should not incommode you less: I am too well convinced you could easily dispense with my visit.

*Vio.* When you behave yourself as you ought to do, no company so welcome—but when you reserve me for your ill-nature, I wave your merit, and consider what's due to myself.——And I must be free to tell you, Felix, that these humours of yours will abate, if not absolutely destroy, the very principles of love.

*Fel.* [*Rising.*] And I must be so free to tell you, madam, that since you have made such ill returns to the respect that I have paid you, all you do shall be indifferent to me for the future; and you shall find me abandon your empire with so little difficulty, that I'll convince the world your chains are not so hard to break as your vanity would tempt you to believe. I cannot brook the provocation you give.

*Vio.* This is not to be borne——insolent! you abandon! you! whom I have so often forbad ever to see me more! Have you not fallen at my feet? implored my favour and forgiveness? did you not trembling wait, and wish, and sigh, and swear yourself into my heart? Ungrateful man! if my chains are so easily broke as you pretend, then you are the silliest coxcomb living, you did not break them long ago; and I must think him capable of brooking any thing, on whom such usage could make no impression.

*Isa.* [*Peeping.*] A deuce take your quarrels! she'll never think on me.

*Fel.* I always believed, madam, my weakness was the greatest addition to your power; you would be less imperious had my inclination been

less forward to oblige you. You have indeed forbad me your sight, but your vanity, even then, assured you I would return, and I was fool enough to feed your pride.—Your eyes, with all their boasted charms, have acquired their greatest glory in conquering me————and the brightest passage of your life is wounding this heart with such arms as pierce but few persons of my rank. [*Walks about in a great pet.*

*Vio.* Matchless arrogance! True, sir, I should have kept measures better with you, if the conquest had been worth preserving; but we easily hazard what gives us no pain to lose.——As for my eyes, you are mistaken if you think they have vanquished none but you: there are men, above your boasted rank, who have confessed their power, when their misfortune in pleasing you made them obtain such a disgraceful victory.

*Fel.* Yes, madam, I am no stranger to your victories.

*Vio.* And what you call the brightest passage of my life, is not the least glorious part of yours.

*Fel.* Ha, ha! don't put yourself in a passion, madam; for, I assure you, after this day, I shall give you no trouble.——You may meet your sparks on the Terriero de Passa at four in the morning, without the least regard to me——for, when I quit your chamber, the world shan't bring me back.

*Vio.* I am so well pleased with your resolution, I don't care how soon you take your leave. —But what you mean by the Terriero de Passa at four in the morning, I can't guess.

*Fel.* No, no, no! not you.————You was not upon the Terriero de Passa at four this morning!

*Vio.* No, I was not; but if I were, I hope I may walk where I please, and at what hour I please, without asking your leave.

*Fel.* Oh, doubtless, madam! and you might meet colonel Briton there, and afterwards send your emissary to fetch him to your house—and, upon your father's coming in, thrust him into your bed-chamber—without asking my leave. 'Tis no business of mine, if you are exposed among all the footmen in town—nay, if they ballad you, and cry you about at a halfpenny a piece—they may, without my leave.

*Vio.* Audacious! don't provoke me—don't: my reputation is not to be sported with [*Going up to him.*] at this rate————no, sir, it is not. [*Bursts into tears.*] Inhuman Felix!————Oh, Isabella! what a train of ills hast thou brought on me! [*Aside.*

*Fel.* Ha! I cannot bear to see her weep—a woman's tears are far more fatal than our swords. [*Aside.*] Oh, Violante—'Sdeath! what a dog am I! Now have I no power to stir.—Dost not thou know such a person as colonel Briton? Prithee tell me, didst not thou meet him at four this morning upon the Terriero de Passa?

*Vio.* Were it not to clear my fame, I would not answer thee, thou black ingrate!—but I cannot bear to be reproached with what I even blush to think of—much less to act. By Heaven, I have not seen the Terriero de Passa this day.

*Fel.* Did not a Scotch footman attack you in the street neither, Violante?

*Vio.* Yes; but he mistook me for another—or he was drunk, I know not which.

*Fel.* And do not you know this Scotch colonel?

*Vio.* Pray, ask me no more questions: this night shall clear my reputation, and leave you without excuse for your base suspicions. More than this I shall not satisfy you; therefore, pray leave me.

*Fel.* Didst thou ever love me, Violante?

*Vio.* I'll answer nothing——You was in haste to be gone just now; I should be very well pleased to be alone, sir.

[*She sits down, and turns aside.*

*Fel.* I shall not long interrupt your contemplation.——Stubborn to the last! [*Aside.*

*Vio.* Did ever woman involve herself as I have done!

*Fel.* Now would I give one of my eyes to be friends with her, for something whispers to my soul, she is not guilty.——[*He pauses, then pulls a chair, and sits by her at a little distance, looking at her some time without speaking, then draws a little nearer to her.*] Give me your hand at parting however, Violante, won't you—[*He lays his hand upon her knee several times.*] won't you————won't you————won't you!

*Vio.* [*Half regarding him.*] Won't I do what?

*Fel.* You know what I would have, Violante. Oh, my heart!

*Vio.* [*Smiling.*] I thought my chains were easily broke. [*Lays her hand into his.*

*Fel.* [*Draws his chair close to her, and kisses her hand in a rapture.*] Too well thou knowest thy strength.————Oh, my charming angel! my heart is all thy own. Forgive my hasty passion —'tis the transport of a love sincere. Oh, Violante, Violante!

DON PEDRO, *within.*

*Ped.* Bid Sancho get a new wheel to my chariot presently.

*Vio.* Bless me, my father returned! What shall we do now, Felix? we are ruined past redemption.

*Fel.* No, no, no, my love; I can leap from the closet window.

[*Runs to the door where* ISABELLA *is, who claps to the door, and bolts it withinside.*

*Isa.* [*Peeping.*] Say you so? But I shall prevent you.

*Fel.* Confusion! Somebody bolts the door withinside. I'll see who you have concealed here, if I die for it. Oh, Violante! hast thou again sacrificed me to my rival? [*Draws.*

*Vio.* By Heaven, thou hast no rival in my heart! let that suffice——Nay, sure, you will not let my father find you here——Distraction!

*Fel.* Indeed, but I shall—except you command this door to be opened, and that way conceal me from his sight.

[*He struggles with her to come at the door.*

*Vio.* Hear me, Felix——Though I were sure the refusing what you ask would separate us for ever, by all that's powerful you shall not enter here! Either you do love me, or you do not: convince me by your obedience.

*Fel.* That's not the matter in debate——I will know who is in this closet, let the consequence be what it will. Nay, nay, you strive in vain: I will go in.

*Vio.* Thou shalt not go————

*Enter* DON PEDRO.

*Ped.* Hey-day! what's here to do? I will go in, and you shan't go in—and I will go in——Why, who are you, sir?

*Fel.* 'Sdeath! what shall I say now?

*Ped.* Don Felix, pray, what's your business in my house? ha, sir?

*Vio.* Oh, sir, what miracle returned you home so soon? some angel 'twas that brought my father back to succour the distressed.——This ruffian, he—I cannot call him gentleman—has committed such an uncommon rudeness, as the most profligate wretch would be ashamed to own.

*Fel.* Ha! what the devil does she mean? [*Aside.*

*Vio.* As I was at my devotion in my closet, I heard a loud knocking at my door, mixed with a woman's voice, which seemed to imply she was in danger——

*Fel.* I am confounded! [*Aside.*

*Vio.* I flew to the door with the utmost speed, where a lady, veiled, rushed in upon me; who, falling on her knees, begged my protection from a gentleman, who, she said, pursued her. I took compassion on her tears, and locked her into this closet; but, in the surprise, having left open the door, this very person whom you see with his sword drawn, ran in, protesting, if I did not give her up to his revenge, he'd force the door.

*Fel.* What, in the name of goodness, does she mean to do? hang me? [*Aside.*

*Vio.* I strove with him, till I was out of breath; and had you not come as you did, he must have entered—But he's in drink, I suppose; or he could not have been guilty of such an indecorum. [*Leering at* FELIX.

*Ped.* I'm amazed!

*Fel.* The devil never failed a woman at a pinch:—what a tale has she formed in a minute!——In drink, quotha! a good hint: I'll lay hold on't to bring myself off. [*Aside.*

*Ped.* Fy! Don Felix!—no sooner rid of one broil, than you are commencing another.——To assault a lady with a naked sword, derogates much from the character of a gentleman, I assure you.

*Fel.* [*Counterfeits drunkenness.*] Who, I assault a lady——upon honour, the lady assaulted me, sir, and would have seized this body-politic on the king's high-way—Let her come out, and deny it, if she can.——Pray, sir, command the door to be opened; and let her prove me a liar, if she knows how————I have been drinking Claret, and Champaign, and Burgundy, and other French wines, sir; but I love my own country, for all that.

*Ped.* Ay, ay, who doubts it, sir? Open the door, Violante, and let the lady come out. Come, I warrant thee he shan't hurt her.

*Fel.* No, no; I won't hurt the dear creature. ——Now, which way will she come off? [*Aside.*

*Vio.* [*Unlocks the door.*] Come forth, madam; none shall dare to touch your veil——I'll convey you out with safety, or lose my life.——I hope she understands me. [*Aside.*

*Enter* ISABELLA, *veiled, and crosses the stage.*

*Isa.* Excellent girl! [*Exit.*

*Fel.* The devil!—a woman!—I'll see if she be really so. [*Aside.*

*Vio.* [*To* FELIX.] Get clear of my father, and follow me to the Terriero de Passa, where all mistakes shall be rectified.

[*Exit with* ISABELLA. DON FELIX *offers to follow her.*

*Ped.* [*Drawing his sword.*] Not a step, sir, till the lady is past your recovery; I never suffer the laws of hospitality to be violated in my house, sir. ——I'll keep Don Felix here, till you see her safe out, Violante.——Come, sir, you and I will take a pipe and a bottle together.

*Fel.* Damn your pipe, and damn your bottle! —I hate drinking and smoking; and how will you help yourself, old whiskers?

*Ped.* As to smoking or drinking, you have your liberty; but you shall stay, sir.

*Fel.* But I won't stay—for I don't like your company; besides, I have the best reason in the world, for my not staying.

*Ped.* Ay, what's that?

*Fel.* Why, I am going to be married; and so, good bye.

*Ped.* To be married!—it can't be. Why, you are drunk, Felix.

*Fel.* Drunk! ay, to be sure; you don't think I'd go to be married, if I were sober——but, drunk or sober, I am going to be married, for all that——and if you won't believe me, to convince you, I'll show you the contract, old gentleman.

*Ped.* Ay, do; come, let's see this contract, then.

*Fel.* Yes, yes; I'll shew you the contract—I'll shew you the contract——Here, sir—here's the contract. [*Draws a pistol.*

*Ped.* [*Starting.*] Well, well, I'm convinced—go, go—pray go, and be married, sir.

*Fel.* Yes, yes; I'll go—I'll go and be married; but shan't we take a bottle, first?

*Ped.* No, no—pray, dear sir, go, and be married.

*Fel.* Very well, very well; [*Going.*] but I insist upon your taking one glass, though.

*Ped.* No, not now—some other time—consider the lady waits.

*Fel.* What a cross old fool! first he will, and then he won't; and then he will, and then he won't. [*Exit.*

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Here's Don Lopez de Pimentell to wait on you, senior.

*Ped.* What the devil does he want? he is not going to be married, too!——Bring him up; he's in pursuit of his son, I suppose.

*Enter* DON LOPEZ.

*Lop.* I am glad to find you at home, Don Pedro——I was told that you was upon the road to Don Juan's chateau this afternoon.

*Ped.* That might be, my lord; but I had the misfortune to break the wheel of my chariot, which obliged me to return.——What is your pleasure with me, my lord?

*Lop.* I am informed that my daughter is in your house.

*Ped.* That's more than I know, my lord; but here was your son, just now, as drunk as an emperor.

*Lop.* My son drunk!—I never saw him in drink in my life.—Where is he, pray, sir?

*Ped.* Gone to be married.

*Lop.* Married!—to whom!—I don't know that he courted any body.

*Ped.* Nay, I know nothing of that—but, I'm sure, he showed me the contract—Within, there!

*Enter Servant.*

Bid my daughter come hither; she'll tell you another story, my lord.

*Ser.* She's gone out in a chair, sir.

*Ped.* Out in a chair!—what do you mean, sir?

*Ser.* As I say, sir—and Donna Isabella went in another just before her.

*Lop.* Isabella!

*Ser.* And Don Felix followed in another—I overheard them all bid the chair go to the Terriero de Passa.

*Ped.* Ha! what business has my daughter there? I am confounded, and know not what to think—within there. [*Exit.*

*Lop.* My heart misgives me plaguily.——Call me an alguazil—I'll pursue them straight. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to the street before* DON PEDRO'S *house.*

*Enter* LISSARDO.

*Lis.* I wish I could see Flora——methinks I have an hankering kindness after the slut——we must be reconciled.

*Enter* GIBBY.

*Gib.* Aw my sal, sir, but Ise blithe to find ye here now.

*Lis.* Ha, brother! give me thy hand, boy.

*Gib.* No se fast, se ye me—Brether me ne brethers; I scorn a leer as muckle as a thiefe, se ye now, and ye must gang intul this house with me, and justifie to Donna Violante's face, that she was the lady that ganged in here this morn, se ye me, or the deel ha my saul, sir, but ye and I shall be twa folks.

*Lis.* Justify it to Donna Violante's face, quotha! For what? Sure you don't know what you say.

*Gib.* Troth de I, sir, as weel as ye dee; therefore, come along, and make na mair words about it.

*Lis.* Why, what the devil do ye mean? Don't you consider you are in Portugal? Is the fellow mad?

*Gib.* Fellow! Ise none of yer fellow, sir; and gin the place were hell, I'd gar ye do me justice. [LISSARDO *going.*] Nay, the deel a fit ye gang. [*Lays hold of him, and knocks.*

*Lis.* Ha! Don Pedro himself: I wish I were fairly off. [*Aside.*

*Enter* DON PEDRO.

*Ped.* How now? What makes you knock so loud?

*Gib.* Gin this be Don Pedro's house, sir, I would speak with Donna Violante, his daughter.

*Ped.* Ha! what is it you want with my daughter, pray?

*Gib.* An she be your daughter, and lik your honour, command her to come out, and answer for herself now, and either justify or disprove what this chield told me this morn.

*Lis.* So, here will be a fine piece of work! [*Aside.*

*Ped.* Why, what did he tell you, ha?

*Gib.* By my saul, sir, Ise tell you aw the truth.—My master got a pratty lady upon the how de call't——Passa—here at five this morn, and he gar'd me watch her heam—and, in troth, lodged her here; and, meeting this ill-favoured thiefe, se ye me, I speered wha she was—and he tald me her name was Donna Violante, Don Pedro de Mendosa's daughter.

*Ped.* Ha! my daughter with a man, abroad at five in the morning! Death, hell, and furies! By St Anthony, I'm undone!

*Gib.* Wounds, sir! ye put yer saint intul bonny company.

*Ped.* Who is your master, you dog you? Adsheart, I shall be tricked of my daughter and money, too, that's worst of all.

*Gib.* You dog you! 'Sblead, sir! dinna ca'

names—I wunna tell you who my master is, se ye me now?

*Ped.* And who are you, rascal, that know my daughter so well? ha! [*Holds up his cane.*

*Lis.* What shall I say, to make him give this Scotch dog a good beating? [*Aside.*]——I know your daughter, signior! Not I; I never saw your daughter in all my life.

*Gib.* [*Knocks him down with his fist.*] Deel ha my saul, sar, gin ye get no your carich for that lie now.

*Ped.* What, hoa! where are all my servants?

*Enter* COLONEL, FELIX, ISABELLA, *and* VIOLANTE.

Raise the house in pursuit of my daughter!

*Ser.* Here she comes, signior.

*Col.* Hey-day! what's here to do?

*Gib.* This is the loon-like tike, an lik your honour, that sent me heam with a lee this morn.

*Col.* Come, come; 'tis all well, Gibby; let him rise.

*Ped.* I am thunderstruck—and have no power to speak one word.

*Fel.* This is a day of jubilee, Lissardo; no quarrelling with him this day.

*Lis.* A pox take his fists!—Egad! these Britons are but a word and a blow.

*Enter* DON LOPEZ.

*Lop.* So, have I found you, daughter? Then you have not hanged yourself yet, I see.

*Col.* But she is married, my lord.

*Lop.* Married! Zounds! to whom?

*Col.* Even to your humble servant, my lord. If you please to give us your blessing. [*Kneels.*

*Lop.* Why, hark ye, mistress, are you really married?

*Isa.* Really so, my lord.

*Lop.* And who are you, sir?

*Col.* An honest North Briton by birth, and a colonel by commission, my lord.

*Lop.* An heretic! the devil! [*Holding up his hands.*

*Ped.* She has played you a slippery trick, indeed, my lord.—Well, my girl, thou hast been to see thy friend married——next week thou shalt have a better husband, my dear. [*To* VIOLANTE.

*Fel.* Next week is a little too soon, sir; I hope to live longer than that.

*Ped.* What do you mean, sir? You have not made a rib of my daughter, too, have you?

*Vio.* Indeed but he has, sir; I know not how, but he took me in an unguarded minute—when my thoughts were not over-strong for a nunnery, father.

*Lop.* Your daughter has played you a slippery trick, too, signior.

*Ped.* But your son shall never be the better for it, my lord; her twenty thousand pounds was left on certain conditions, and I'll not part with a shilling.

*Lop.* But we have a certain thing, called law, shall make you do justice, sir.

*Ped.* Well, we'll try that—my lord, much good may it do you with your daughter-in-law. [*Exit.*

*Lop.* I wish you much joy of your rib. [*Exit.*

*Enter* FREDERICK.

*Fel.* Frederick, welcome!—I sent for thee to be partaker of my happiness; and pray give me leave to introduce you to the cause of it.

*Fred.* Your messenger has told me all, and I sincerely share in all your happiness.

*Col.* To the right about, Frederick; wish thy friend joy.

*Fred.* I do, with all my soul—and, madam, I congratulate your deliverance.—Your suspicions are cleared now, I hope, Felix?

*Fel.* They are; and I heartily ask the colonel pardon, and wish him happy with my sister; for love has taught me to know, that every man's happiness consists in choosing for himself.

*Lis.* After that rule, I fix here. [*To* FLORA.

*Flo.* That's your mistake; I prefer my lady's service, and turn you over to her that pleaded right and title to you to-day.

*Lis.* Choose, proud fool! I sha'nt ask you twice.

*Gib.* What say ye now, lass?—will ye gee yer hond to poor Gibby?—What say you? will you dance the reel of Bogie with me?

*Inis.* That I may not leave my lady, I take you at your word; and, though our wooing has been short, I'll, by her example, love you dearly. [*Music plays.*

*Fel.* Hark! I hear the music; somebody has done us the favour to call them in. [*A country-dance.*

*Gib.* Wounds, this is bonny music!——How caw ye that thing that ye pinch by the craig, and tickle the weamb, and make it cry grum, grum?

*Fred.* Oh! that's a guitar, Gibby.

*Fel.* Now, my Violante, I shall proclaim thy virtues to the world.

Let us no more thy sex's conduct blame,
Since thou'rt a proof, to their eternal fame,
That man has no advantage, but the name.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

# THE

# DRUMMER;

## OR,

# THE HAUNTED HOUSE.

BY

*ADDISON.*

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## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### MEN.

SIR GEORGE TRUMAN, *supposed dead.*
TINSEL, *a coxcomb pretending to* LADY TRUMAN.
FANTOME, *the drummer.*
VELLUM, SIR GEORGE TRUMAN'S *steward.*
BUTLER.
COACHMAN.
GARDENER.

### WOMEN.

LADY TRUMAN, *supposed widow of* SIR GEORGE.
ABIGAIL, *her maid.*

*Scene—A county in England.*

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## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—*A great hall.*

*Enter the* BUTLER, COACHMAN, *and* GARDENER.

*But.* There came another coach to town last night, that brought a gentleman to inquire about this strange noise we hear in the house. This spirit will bring a power of custom to the George.——If so be he continues his pranks, I design to sell a pot of ale, and set up the sign of the drum.

*Coach.* I'll give madam warning, that's flat—I've always lived in sober families—I'll not disparage myself to be a servant in a house that is haunted.

*Gard.* I'll e'en marry Nell, and rent a bit of ground of my own, if both of you leave madam; not but that madam is a very good woman, if Mrs Abigail did not spoil her.——Come, here's her health.

*But.* 'Tis a very hard thing to be a butler in a house that is disturbed. He made such a racket in the cellar last night, that I'm afraid he'll sour all the beer in my barrels.

*Coach.* Why, then, John, we ought to take it off as fast as we can.—Here's to you.—He rattled so loud under the tiles last night, that I verily thought the house would have fallen over our heads. I durst not go up into the cock-loft this morning, if I had not got one of the maids to go along with me.

*Gard.* I thought I heard him in one of my bed-posts. I marvel, John, how he gets into the house, when all the gates are shut!

*But.* Why, look ye, Peter, your spirit will creep you into an augre-hole——he'll whisk ye through a key-hole, without so much as justling against one of the wards.

*Coach.* Poor madam is mainly frighted, that's certain; and verily believes it is my master, that was killed in the last campaign.

*But.* Out of all manner of question, Robin,

'tis sir George. Mrs Abigail is of opinion, it can be none but his honour. He always liked the wars; and, you know, was mightly pleased, from a child, with the music of a drum.

*Gard.* I wonder his body was never found after the battle.

*But.* Found! Why, ye fool, is not his body here about the house? Dost thou think he can beat his drum without hands and arms?

*Coach.* 'Tis master, as sure as I stand here alive; and I verily believe I saw him last night in the town-close.

*Gard.* Ay! How did he appear?

*Coach.* Like a white horse.

*But.* Phoo, Robin! I tell ye he has never appeared yet, but in the shape of the sound of a drum.

*Coach.* This makes one almost afraid of one's own shadow. As I was walking from the stable t'other night, without my lanthorn, I fell across a beam that lay in my way; and faith my heart was in my mouth. I thought I had stumbled over a spirit!

*But.* Thou might'st as well have stumbled over a straw. Why, a spirit is such a little thing, that I have heard a man, who was a great scholar, say, that he'll dance you a Lancashire hornpipe upon the point of a needle. As I sat in the pantry last night, counting my spoons, the candle, methought, burnt blue, and the spayed bitch looked as if she saw something.

*Coach.* Ay, poor cur, she is almost frightened out of her wits!

*Gard.* Ay, I warrant ye, she hears him, many a time and often, when we don't.

*But.* My lady must have him laid, that's certain, whatever it cost her.

*Gard.* I fancy, when one goes to market, one might hear of somebody that can make a spell.

*Coach.* Why, may not the parson of our parish lay him?

*But.* No, no, no; our parson cannot lay him.

*Coach.* Why not he, as well as another man?

*But.* Why, ye fool, he is not qualified. He has not taken the oaths.

*Gard.* Why, d'ye think, John, that the spirit would take the law of him? Faith, I could tell you one way to drive him off.

*Coach.* How's that?

*Gard.* I'll tell you immediately.—[*Drinks.*]—I fancy Mrs Abigail might scold him out of the house.

*Coach.* Ay, she has a tongue that would drown his drum, if any thing could.

*But.* Pugh, this is all froth; you understand nothing of the matter. The next time it makes a noise, I tell you what ought to be done——I would have the steward speak Latin to it.

*Coach.* Ay, that would do, if the steward had but courage.

*Gard.* There you have it. He's a fearful man. If I had as much learning as he, and I met the ghost, I'd tell him his own. But, alack! what can one of us poor men do with a spirit, that can neither write nor read?

*But.* Thou art always cracking and boasting, Peter; thou dost not know what mischief it might do thee, if such a silly dog as thee should offer to speak to it. For aught I know, he might flea thee alive, and make parchment of thy skin, to cover his drum with.

*Gard.* A fiddlestick! tell not me—I fear nothing, not I. I never did harm in my life; I never committed murder.

*But.* I verily believe thee. Keep thy temper, Peter; after supper we'll drink each of us a double mug, and then let come what will.

*Gard.* Why, that's well said, John—An honest man, that is not quite sober, has nothing to fear—Here's to ye———Why, now, if he should come this minute, here would I stand——Ha! what noise is that?

*But. Coach.* Ha! where?

*Gard.* The devil! the devil! Oh, no, 'tis Mrs Abigail.

*But.* Ay, faith! 'tis she; 'tis Mrs Abigail! A good mistake; 'tis Mrs Abigail.

*Enter* ABIGAIL.

*Abi.* Here are your drunken sots for you! Is this a time to be guzzling, when gentry are come to the house! Why don't you lay your cloth? How come you out of the stables? Why are you not at work in your garden?

*Gard.* Why, yonder's the fine Londoner and madam fetching a walk together; and, methought, they looked as if they should say, they had rather have my room than my company.

*But.* And so, forsooth, being all three met together, we are doing our endeavours to drink this same drummer out of our heads.

*Gard.* For you must know, Mrs Abigail, we are all of opinion, that one cannot be a match for him, unless one be as drunk as a drum.

*Coach.* I am resolved to give madam warning to hire herself another coachman; for I came to serve my master, d'ye see, while he was alive; but do suppose that he has no further occasion for a coach, now he walks.

*But.* Truly, Mrs Abigail, I must needs say, that this spirit is a very odd sort of a body, after all, to fright madam, and his old servants, at this rate.

*Gard.* And truly, Mrs Abigail, I must needs say, I served my master contentedly, while he was living; but I will serve no man living (that is, no man that is not living) without double wages.

*Abi.* Ay, 'tis such cowards as you that go about with idle stories, to disgrace the house, and bring so many strangers about it: you first frighten yourselves, and then your neighbours.

*Gard.* Frightened! I scorn your words: frightened, quotha!

*Abi.* What, you sot! are you grown pot-valiant?

*Gard.* Frightened with a drum! that's a good one! It will do us no harm, I'll answer for it: it will bring no blood-shed along with it, take my word. It sounds as like a train-band drum as ever I heard in my life.

*But.* Pr'ythee, Peter, don't be so presumptuous.

*Abi.* Well, these drunken rogues take it as I could wish. [*Aside.*

*Gard.* I scorn to be frightened, now I am in for't; if old dub-a-dub come into the room, I would take him———

*But.* Prithee, hold thy tongue.

*Gard.* I would take him———

[*The drum beats: the Gardener endeavours to get off, and falls.*

*But. Coach.* Speak to it, Mrs Abigail!

*Gard.* Spare my life, and take all I have!

*Coach.* Make off, make off, good butler, and let us go hide ourselves in the cellar.

[*They all run off.*

*Abi.* So, now the coast is clear, I may venture to call out my drummer—But first, let me shut the door, lest we be surprised. Mr Fantome! Mr Fantome!—[*He beats*]—Nay, nay, pray come out: the enemy's fled——I must speak with you immediately——Don't stay to beat a parley.

[*The back scene opens, and discovers* FANTOME *with a drum.*

*Fan.* Dear Mrs Nabby, I have overheard all that has been said, and find thou hast managed this thing so well, that I could take thee in my arms and kiss thee——If my drum did not stand in my way.

*Abi.* Well, o' my conscience, you are the merriest ghost! and the very picture of sir George Truman.

*Fan.* There you flatter me, Mrs Abigail: sir George had that freshness in his looks, that we men of the town cannot come up to.

*Abi.* Oh, death may have altered you, you know—Besides, you must consider, you lost a great deal of blood in the battle.

*Fan.* Aye, that's right; let me look never so pale, this cut cross my forehead will keep me in countenance.

*Abi.* 'Tis just such a one as my master received from a cursed French trooper, as my lady's letter informed her.

*Fan.* It happens luckily, that this suit of clothes of sir George's fits me so well——I think I cannot fail hitting the air of a man with whom I was so long acquainted.

*Abi.* You are the very man—I vow I almost start, when I look upon you.

*Fan.* But what good will this do me, if I must remain invisible?

*Abi.* Pray, what good did your being visible do you? The fair Mr Fantome thought no woman could withstand him—But, when you were seen by my lady in your proper person, after she had taken a full survey of you, and heard all the pretty things you could say, she very civilly dismissed you for the sake of this empty, noisy creature, Tinsel. She fancies you have been gone from hence this fortnight.

*Fan.* Why, really, I love thy lady so well, that, though I had no hopes of gaining her for myself, I could not bear to see her given to another, especially such a wretch as Tinsel.

*Abi.* Well, tell me truly, Mr Fantome, have not you a great opinion of my fidelity to my dear lady, that I would not suffer her to be deluded in this manner for less than a thousand pounds?

*Fan.* Thou art always reminding me of my promise—thou shalt have it, if thou canst bring our project to bear: dost not know, that stories of ghosts and apparitions generally end in a pot of money?

*Abi.* Why, truly, now, Mr Fantome, I should think myself a very bad woman, if I had done what I do for a farthing less.

*Fan.* Dear Abigail, how I admire thy virtue!

*Abi.* No, no, Mr Fantome; I defy the worst of my enemies to say I love mischief for mischief's sake.

*Fan.* But is thy lady persuaded that I'm the ghost of her deceased husband?

*Abi.* I endeavour to make her believe so: and tell her, every time your drum rattles, that her husband is chiding her for entertaining this new lover.

*Fan.* Prithee, make use of all thy art: for I'm tired to death with strolling round this wide old house, like a rat behind the wainscoat.

*Abi.* Did not I tell you, 'twas the purest place in the world for you to play your tricks in? There's none of the family that knows every hole and corner in it, besides myself.

*Fan.* Ah, Mrs Abigail! You have had your intrigues——

*Abi.* For, you must know, when I was a romping young girl, I was a mighty lover of hide and seek.

*Fan.* I believe, by this time, I am as well acquainted with the house as yourself.

*Abi.* You are very much mistaken, Mr Fantome: but no matter for that; here is to be your station to-night. This place is unknown to any one living, besides myself, since the death of the joiner, who, you must understand, being a lover of mine, contrived the wainscoat to move to and fro, in the manner that you find it. I designed it for a wardrobe for my lady's clothes. Oh, the stomachers, stays, petticoats, commodes, laced shoes, and good things, that I have had in it! Pray, take care you don't break the cherry brandy bottle, that stands up in the corner.

*Fan.* Well, Mrs Abigail, I hire your closet of you but for this one night—A thousand pounds you know, is a very good rent.

*Abi.* Well, get you gone: you have such a way with you, there's no denying you any thing.

*Fan.* I am thinking how Tinsel will stare, when he sees me come out of the wall; for I am resolved to make my appearance to-night.

*Abi.* Get you in, get you in; my lady's at the door.

*Fan.* Pray, take care she does not keep me up so late as she did last night, or, depend upon it, I'll beat the tattoo.

*Abi.* I'm undone, I'm undone!—[*As he is going in.*]—Mr Fantome! Mr Fantome! Have you put the thousand pound bond into my brother's hand?

*Fan.* Thou shalt have it; I tell thee, thou shalt have it.

[FANTOME *goes in.*

*Abi.* No more words—Vanish, vanish!

*Enter* LADY TRUEMAN.

*Abi.* [*Opening the door.*]—Oh, dear madam, was it you that made such a knocking? My heart does so beat——I vow you have frighted me to death——I thought, verily, it had been the drummer.

*Lady True.* I have been shewing the garden to Mr Tinsel: he's most insufferably witty upon us, about this story of the drum.

*Abi.* Indeed, madam, he's a very loose man: I'm afraid 'tis he that hinders my poor master from resting in his grave.

*Lady True.* Well, an infidel is such a novelty in the country, that I am resolved to divert myself a day or two, at least, with the oddness of his conversation.

*Abi.* Ah, madam, the drum began to beat in the house, as soon as ever that creature was admitted to visit you. All the while Mr Fantome made his addresses to you, there was not a mouse stirring in the family, more than used to be—

*Lady True.* This baggage has some design upon me, more than I can yet discover.—[*Aside.*]—Mr Fantome was always thy favourite.

*Abi.* Aye, and should have been yours, too, by my consent. Mr Fantome was not such a slight fantastic thing as this is—Mr Fantome was the best built man one should see in a summer's day! Mr Fantome was a man of honour, and loved you. Poor soul! how has he sighed, when he has talked to me of my hard-hearted lady. Well, I had as lief as a thousand pounds, you would marry Mr Fantome.

*Lady True.* To tell thee truly, I loved him well enough, till he loved me so much. But Mr Tinsel makes his court to me with so much neglect and indifference, and with such an agreeable sauciness—Not that I say I'll marry him.

*Abi.* Marry him, quotha! No—if you should, you'll be awakened sooner than married couples generally are—You'll quickly have a drum at your window.

*Lady True.* I'll hide my contempt of Tinsel for once, if it be but to see what this wench drives at. [*Aside.*

*Abi.* Why, suppose your husband, after this fair warning he has given you, should sound you an alarm at midnight; then open your curtains with a face as pale as my apron, and cry out with a hollow voice—What dost thou do in bed with this spindle-shanked fellow?

*Lady True.* Why wilt thou needs have it to be my husband? He never had any reason to be offended at me. I always loved him while he was living; and should prefer him to any man, were he so still. Mr Tinsel is, indeed, very idle in his talk: but I fancy, Abigail, a discreet woman might reform him.

*Abi.* That's a likely matter, indeed! Did you ever hear of a woman who had power over a man when she was his wife, that had none while she was his mistress? Oh, there's nothing in the world improves a man in his complaisance like marriage!

*Lady True.* He is, indeed, at present, too familiar in his conversation.

*Abi.* Familiar, madam! in troth, he's downright rude.

*Lady True.* But that, you know, Abigail, shews he has no dissimulation in him——Then he is apt to jest a little too much upon grave subjects.

*Abi.* Grave subjects! He jests upon the church.

*Lady True.* You talk as if you hated him.

*Abi.* You talk as if you loved him.

*Lady True.* Hold your tongue; here he comes.

*Enter* TINSEL.

*Tin.* My dear widow!

*Abi.* My dear widow! Marry come up! [*Aside.*

*Lady True.* Let him alone, Abigail; so long as he does not call me my dear wife, there's no harm done.

*Tin.* I have been most ridiculously diverted since I left you——Your servants have made a convert of my booby: his head is so filled with this foolish story of a drummer, that I expect the rogue will be afraid hereafter to go a message by moon-light.

*Lady True.* Aye, Mr Tinsel, what a loss of billet-doux would that be to many a fine lady!

*Abi.* Then you still believe this to be a foolish story? I thought my lady had told you, that she had heard it herself.

*Tin.* Ha, ha, ha!

*Abi.* Why, you would not persuade us out of our senses?

*Tin.* Ha, ha, ha!

*Abi.* There's manners for you, madam! [*Aside.*

*Lady True.* Admirably rallied! That laugh was unanswerable! Now, I'll be hanged if you could forbear being witty upon me, if I should

tell you I heard it no longer ago than last night.

*Tin.* Fancy!

*Lady True.* But what if I should tell you my maid was with me?

*Tin.* Vapours, vapours! Pray, my dear widow, will you answer me one question? Had you ever this noise of a drum in your head, all the while your husband was living? Believe me, madam, I could prescribe you a cure for these imaginations.

*Abi.* Don't tell my lady of imaginations, sir; I have heard it myself.

*Tin.* Hark thee, child——Art thou an old maid?

*Abi.* Sir, if I am, it is my own fault.

*Tin.* Whims! Freaks! Megrims! indeed, Mrs Abigail.

*Abi.* Marry, sir, by your talk, one would believe you thought every thing that was good is a megrim.

*Lady True.* Though you give no credit to stories of apparitions, I hope you believe there are such things as spirits?

*Tin.* Simplicity!

*Abi.* I fancy you don't believe women have souls, d'ye, sir?

*Tin.* Foolish enough! But where's this ghost? this son of a whore of a drummer? I'd fain hear him, methinks.

*Abi.* Pray, madam, don't suffer him to give the ghost such ill language, especially when you have reason to believe it is my master.

*Tin.* That's well enough, faith, Nab; dost thou think thy master so unreasonable, as to continue his claim to his relict after his bones are laid? Pray, widow, remember the words of your contract—you have fulfilled them to a tittle—Did not you marry sir George to the tune of *Till death us do part?*

*Lady True.* I must not hear sir George's memory treated in so slight a manner.

*Tin.* Give me but possession of your person, and I'll whirl you up to town for a winter, and cure you at once. Oh, we'd pass all our time in London. 'Tis the scene of pleasure and diversions, where there's something to amuse you every hour of the day. Life's not life in the country.

*Lady True.* Well, then, you have an opportunity of shewing the sincerity of that love to me which you profess. You may give a proof that you have an affection to my person, not my jointure.

*Tin.* Your jointure! How can you think me such a dog? But, child, won't your jointure be the same thing in London, as in the country?

*Lady True.* No; you're deceived. You must know it is settled on me by marriage articles, on condition that I live in this old mansion-house, and keep it up in repair.

*Tin.* How!

*Abi.* That's well put, madam.

*Tin.* Why, faith, I have been looking upon this house, and think it is the prettiest habitation I ever saw in my life.

*Lady True.* Aye, but then this cruel drum!

*Tin.* Something so venerable in it!

*Lady True.* Aye, but the drum!

*Tin.* For my part, I like this Gothic way of building better than any of your new orders—— it would be a thousand pities it should fall to ruin.

*Lady True.* Aye, but the drum!

*Tin.* How pleasantly we two could pass our time in this delicious situation! Our lives would be a continued dream of happiness. Come, faith, widow, let's go upon the leads, and take a view of the country.

*Lady True.* Aye, but the drum! the drum!

*Tin.* My dear, take my word for it, 'tis all fancy: besides, should he drum in thy very bedchamber, I should only hug thee the closer.

Clasped in the folds of love, I'd meet my doom,
And act my joys, though thunder shook the room. [*Exeunt.*

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*Opens and discovers* VELLUM *in his office, and a letter in his hand.*

*Vel.* This letter astonisheth; may I believe my own eyes—or rather my spectacles——To Humphrey Vellum, esq. steward to the lady Trueman.

'VELLUM,

'I doubt not but you will be glad to hear your 'master is alive, and designs to be with you in 'half an hour. The report of my being slain in 'the Netherlands, has, I find, produced some 'disorders in my family. I am now at the 'George Inn. If an old man with a grey beard, 'in a black cloak, enquires after you, give him 'admittance. He passes for a conjurer, but is 'really

'Your faithful friend,

'G. TRUEMAN.

'P. S. Let this be a secret, and you shall find 'your account in it.'

This amazeth me! and yet the reasons why I should believe he is still living are manifold—— First, because this has often been the case of other military adventurers. Secondly, because this news of his death was first published in Dyer's Letter. Thirdly, because this letter can be written by none but himself——I know his hand, and manner of spelling. Fourthly——

*Enter* BUTLER.

*But.* Sir, here's a strange old gentleman that asks for you; he says he's a coujurer, but he looks very suspicious; I wish he ben't a Jesuit.

*Vel.* Admit him immediately,

*But.* I wish he ben't a Jesuit; but he says he's nothing but a conjurer.

*Vel.* He says right—He is no more than a conjurer. Bring him in, and withdraw. [*Exit Butler.*]——And fourthly, as I was saying, because——

*Enter Butler, with* SIR GEORGE.

*But.* Sir, here's the conjurer———What a devilish long beard he has! I warrant it has been growing these hundred years. [*Aside. Exit.*

*Sir Geo.* Dear Vellum, you have received my letter: but, before we proceed, lock the door.

*Vel.* It is his voice. [*Shuts the door.*

*Sir Geo.* In the next place, help me off with this cumbersome cloak.

*Vel.* It is his shape.

*Sir Geo.* So; now, lay my beard upon the table.

*Vel.* [*After having looked on* SIR GEORGE *through his spectacles.*] It is his face, every lineament!

*Sir Geo.* Well, now I have put off the conjurer and the old man, I can talk to thee more at my ease.

*Vel.* Believe me, my good master, I am as much rejoiced to see you alive, as I was upon the day you were born. Your name is in all the newspapers in the list of those that were slain.

*Sir Geo.* We have not time to be particular. I shall only tell thee, in general, that I was taken prisoner in the battle, and was under close confinement several months. Upon my release, I was resolved to surprize my wife with the news of being alive. I know, Vellum, you are a person of so much penetration, that I need not use any further arguments to convince you that I am so.

*Vel.* I am—and moreover, I question not but your good lady will likewise be convinced of it. Her honour is a discerning lady.

*Sir Geo.* I am only afraid she could be convinced of it to her sorrow. Is she not pleased with her imaginary widowhood? Tell me truly; was she afflicted at the report of my death?

*Vel.* Sorely.

*Sir Geo.* How long did her grief last?

*Vel.* Longer than I have known any widow's—at least three days.

*Sir Geo.* Three days, say'st thou?—Three whole days!—I am afraid thou flatterest me—Oh, woman, woman!

*Vel.* Grief is twofold———

*Sir Geo.* This blockhead is as methodical as ever—but I know he is honest. [*Aside.*

*Vel.* There is a real grief, and there is a methodical grief: she was drowned in tears till such time as the tailor had made her widow's weeds———Indeed, they became her.

*Sir Geo.* Became her! and was that her comfort? Truly, a most seasonable consolation!

*Vel.* I must needs say she paid a due regard to your memory, and could not forbear weeping when she saw company.

*Sir Geo.* That was kind, indeed! I find she grieved with a great deal of good breeding. But how comes this gang of lovers about her?

*Vel.* Her jointure is considerable.

*Sir Geo.* How this fool torments me! [*Aside.*

*Vel.* Her person is amiable.

*Sir Geo.* Death! [*Aside.*

*Vel.* But her character is unblemished. She has been as virtuous in your absence as a Penelope——

*Sir Geo.* And has had as many suitors?

*Vel.* Several have made their overtures.

*Sir Geo.* Several!

*Vel.* But she has rejected all.

*Sir Geo.* There thou revivest me! But what means this Tinsel? Are his visits acceptable?

*Vel.* He is young.

*Sir Geo* Does she listen to him?

*Vel.* He is gay.

*Sir Geo.* Sure she could never entertain a thought of marrying such a coxcomb!

*Vel.* He is not ill made.

*Sir Geo.* Are the vows and protestations that passed between us come to this? I can't bear the thought of it! Is Tinsel the man designed for my worthy successor?

*Vel.* You do not consider that you have been dead these fourteen months———

*Sir Geo.* Was there ever such a dog! [*Aside.*

*Vel.* And I have often heard her say, that she must never expect to find a second sir George Trueman—meaning your ho—nour.

*Sir Geo.* I think she loved me! but I must search into this story of the drummer, before I discover myself to her. I have put on this habit of a conjurer, in order to introduce myself. It must be your business to recommend me as a most profound person, that, by my great knowledge in the curious arts, can silence the drummer, and disposess the house.

*Vel.* I am going to lay my accounts before my lady; and I will endeavour to prevail upon her ho—nour to admit the trial of your art.

*Sir Geo.* I have scarce heard of any of these stories, that did not arise from a love-intrigue.—Amours raise as many ghosts as murders.

*Vel.* Mrs Abigail endeavours to persuade us, that 'tis your ho—nour who troubles the house.

*Sir Geo.* That convinces me 'tis a cheat; for I think, Vellum, I may be pretty well assured it is not me.

*Vel.* I am apt to think so, truly. Ha, ha, ha!

*Sir Geo.* Abigail had always an ascendant over her lady; and if there is a trick in this matter, depend upon it, she is at the bottom of it. I'll be hanged if this ghost is not one of Abigail's familiars!

*Vel.* Mrs Abigail has of late been very mysterious.

*Sir Geo.* I fancy, Vellum, thou couldst worm it out of her. I know formerly there was an amour between you.

*Vel.* Mrs Abigail hath her allurements; and she knows I have picked up a competency in your honour's service.

*Sir Geo.* If thou hast, all I ask of thee, in return, is, that thou wouldst immediately renew thy addresses to her. Coax her up. Thou hast such a silver tongue, Vellum, as 'twill be impossible for her to withstand. Besides, she is so very a woman, that she'll like you the better for giving her the pleasure of telling a secret. In short, wheedle her out of it, and I shall act by the advice which thou givest me.

*Vel.* Mrs Abigail was never deaf to me, when I talked upon that subject. I will take an opportunity of addressing myself to her in the most pathetic manner.

*Sir Geo.* In the mean time, lock me up in your office, and bring me word what success you have——Well, sure I am the first that ever was employed to lay himself!

*Vel.* You act, indeed, a threefold part in this house; you are a ghost, a conjurer, and my ho—noured master, sir George Trueman; he, he, he! You will pardon me for being jocular.

*Sir Geo.* Oh, Mr Vellum, with all my heart! You know I love you men of wit and humour. Be as merry as thou pleasest, so thou dost thy business. [*Mimicking him.*] You will remember, Vellum, your commission is twofold; first, to gain admission for me to your lady; and, secondly, to get the secret out of Abigail.

*Vel.* It sufficeth. [*The scene shuts.*

*Enter* LADY TRUEMAN.

*Lady True.* Women, who have been happy in a first marriage, are the most apt to venture upon a second. But, for my part, I had a husband so every way suited to my inclinations, that I must entirely forget him, before I can like another man. I have now been a widow but fourteen months, and have had twice as many lovers, all of them professed admirers of my person, but passionately in love with my jointure. I think it is a revenge I owe my sex, to make an example of this worthless tribe of fellows. But, here comes Abigail; I must tease the baggage; for, I find she has taken it into her head, that I'm entirely at her disposal.

*Enter* ABIGAIL.

*Abi.* Madam, madam! yonder's Mr Tinsel has as good as taken possession of your house. Marry, he says, he must have sir George's apartment enlarged; for, truly, says he, I hate to be straitened. Nay, he was so impudent as to shew me the chamber where he intends to consummate, as he calls it.

*Lady True.* Well, he's a wild fellow.

*Abi.* Indeed, he's a very sad man, madam.

*Lady True.* He's young, Abigail; 'tis a thousand pities he should be lost; I should be mighty glad to reform him!

*Abi.* Reform him! marry, hang him!

*Lady True.* Has he not a great deal of life?

*Abi.* Ay! enough to make your heart ache.

*Lady True.* I dare say thou think'st him a very agreeable fellow.

*Abi.* He thinks himself so, I'll answer for him.

*Lady True.* He's very good-natured.

*Abi.* He ought to be so; for he's very silly.

*Lady True.* Dost thou think he loves me?

*Abi.* Mr Fantome did, I'm sure.

*Lady True.* With what raptures he talked!

*Abi.* Yes; but 'twas in praise of your jointure-house.

*Lady True.* He has kept bad company.

*Abi.* They must be very bad, indeed, if they were worse than himself.

*Lady True.* I have a strong fancy a good woman might reform him.

*Abi.* It would be a fine experiment, if it should not succeed.

*Lady True.* Well, Abigail, we'll talk of that another time. Here comes the steward. I have no further occasion for you at present.

[*Exit* ABI.

*Enter* VELLUM.

*Vel.* Madam, is your ho-nour at leisure to look into the accounts of the last week? They rise very high. Housekeeping is chargeable in a house that is haunted.

*Lady True.* How comes that to pass? I hope the drum neither eats nor drinks. But read your account, Vellum.

*Vel.* [*Putting on and off his spectacles in this scene.*] A hogshead and a half of ale—It is not for the ghost's drinking; but your ho—nour's servants say, they must have something to keep up their courage against this strange noise. They tell me, they expect a double quantity of malt in their small beer, so long as the house continues in this condition.

*Lady True.* At this rate, they'll take care to be frightened all the year round, I'll answer for them. But go on.

*Vel. Item*, Two sheep, and a—Where is the ox?—Oh, here I have him!—and an ox—Your ho—nour must always have a piece of cold beef in the house, for the entertainment of so many strangers, who come from all parts to hear this drum. *Item*, Bread, ten peck loaves—They cannot eat beef without bread. *Item*, Three barrels of table beer—They must have drink with their meat.

*Lady True.* Sure no woman in England has

a steward that makes such ingenious comments on his works! [*Aside.*

*Vel. Item,* To Mr Tinsel's servants, five bottles of port wine—It was by your ho—nour's order. *Item,* Three bottles of sack, for the use of Mrs Abigail.

*Lady True.* I suppose that was by your own order.

*Vel.* We have been long friends; we are your honour's ancient servants. Sack is an innocent cordial; and gives her spirit to chide the servants, when they are tardy in their business; he, he, he! Pardon me for being jocular.

*Lady True.* Well, I see you'll come together at last.

*Vel. Item,* A dozen pound of watch-lights, for the use of the servants.

*Lady True.* For the use of the servants! What! are the rogues afraid of sleeping in the dark? What an unfortunate woman am I! This is such a particular distress, it puts me to my wits end. Vellum, what would you advise me to do?

*Vel.* Madam, your ho—nour has two points to consider. *Imprimis,* To retrench these extravagant expences, which bring so many strangers upon you—Secondly, to clear the house of this invisible drummer.

*Lady True.* This learned division leaves me just as wise as I was. But how must we bring these two points to bear?

*Vel.* I beseech your ho—nour to give me the hearing.

*Lady True.* I do; but, prithee, take pity on me, and be not tedious.

*Vel.* I will be concise. There is a certain person arrived this morning, an aged man, of a venerable aspect, and of a long, hoary beard, that reacheth down to his girdle. The common people call him a wizard, a white-witch, a conjurer, a cunning man, a necromancer, a——

*Lady True.* No matter for his titles. But what of all this?

*Vel.* Give me the hearing, good my lady. He pretends to great skill in the occult sciences, and is come hither upon the rumour of this drum. If one may believe him, he knows the secret of laying ghosts, or of quieting houses that are haunted.

*Lady True.* Pho! these are idle stories, to amuse the country people: this can do us no good.

*Vel.* It can do us no harm, my lady.

*Lady True.* I dare say, thou dost not believe there is any thing in it thyself?

*Vel.* I cannot say I do; there is no danger, however, in the experiment. Let him try his skill; if it should succeed, we are rid of the drum; if it should not, we may tell the world that it has, and, by that means, at least get out of this expensive way of living; so that it must turn to your advantage, one way or another.

*Lady True.* I think you argue very rightly. But where is the man? I would fain see him. He must be a curiosity.

*Vel.* I have already discoursed him, and he is to be with me, in my office, half an hour hence. He asks nothing for his pains till he has done his work—No cure, no money.

*Lady True.* That circumstance, I must confess, would make one believe there is more in his art than one would imagine. Pray, Vellum, go and fetch him hither immediately.

*Vel.* I am gone. He shall be forth-coming forthwith. [*Exeunt.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.

*Opens, and discovers* SIR GEORGE *in* VELLUM'S *office.*

*Sir Geo.* I WONDER I don't hear of Vellum yet. But I know his wisdom will do nothing rashly. This fellow has been so used to form in business, that it has infected his whole conversation. But I must not find fault with that punctual and exact behaviour which has been of so much use to me; my estate is the better for it.

*Enter* VELLUM.

Well, Vellum, I'm impatient to hear your success.

*Vel.* First, let me lock the door.

*Sir Geo.* Will your lady admit me?

*Vel.* If this lock is not mended soon, it will be quite spoiled.

*Sir Geo.* Prithee, let the lock alone at present, and answer me.

*Vel.* Delays in business are dangerous—I must send for the smith next week; and, in the mean time, will take a minute of it.

*Sir Geo.* But what says your lady?

*Vel.* This pen is naught, and wants mending—My lady, did you say?

*Sir Geo.* Does she admit me?

*Vel.* I have gained admission for you as a conjurer.

*Sir Geo.* That's enough—I'll gain admission for myself as a husband. Does she believe there's any thing in my art?

*Vel.* It is hard to know what a woman believes.

*Sir Geo.* Did she ask no questions about me?

*Vel.* Sundry——She desires to talk with you herself, before you enter upon your business.

*Sir Geo.* But when?

*Vel.* Immediately—this instant.

*Sir Geo.* Pugh! what hast thou been doing all this while? Why didst not tell me so? Give me my cloak—Have you met with Abigail?

*Vel.* I have not yet had an opportunity of talking with her; but we have interchanged some languishing glances.

*Sir Geo.* Let thee alone for that, Vellum. I have formerly seen thee ogle her through thy spectacles. Well, this is a most venerable cloak. After the business of this day is over, I'll make thee a present of it. 'Twill become thee mightily.

*Vel.* He, he, he! Would you make a conjurer of your steward?

*Sir Geo.* Prithee, don't be jocular; I'm in haste. Help me on with my beard.

*Vel.* And what will your honour do with your cast beard?

*Sir Geo.* Why, faith, thy gravity wants only such a beard to it. If thou wouldst wear it with the cloak, thou wouldst make a most complete heathen philosopher. But where's my wand?

*Vel.* A fine taper stick—It is well chosen. I will keep this till you are sheriff of the county. It is not my custom to let any thing be lost.

*Sir Geo.* Come, Vellum, lead the way. You must introduce me to your lady. Thou art the fittest fellow in the world to be master of the ceremonies to a conjurer. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter* ABIGAIL, *crossing the stage,* TINSEL *following.*

*Tin.* Nabby, Nabby! whither so fast, child?

*Abi.* Keep your hands to yourself. I'm going to call the steward to my lady.

*Tin.* What, Goodman Twofold? I met him walking with a strange old fellow yonder. I suppose he belongs to the family, too. He looks very antique. He must be some of the furniture of this old mansion-house.

*Abi.* What does the man mean? Don't think to palm me, as ye do my lady.

*Tin.* Prithee, Nabby, tell me one thing—What's the reason thou art my enemy?

*Abi.* Marry, because I'm a friend to my lady.

*Tin.* Dost thou see any thing about me thou dost not like? Come hither, hussy—Give me a kiss. Don't be ill-natured.

*Abi.* Sir, I know how to be civil. [*Kisses her.*] This rogue will carry off my lady, if I don't take care. [*Aside.*

*Tin.* Thy lips are as soft as velvet, Abigail. I must get thee a husband.

*Abi.* Ay, now you don't speak idly—I can talk to you.

*Tin.* I have one in my eye for thee. Dost thou love a young lusty son of a whore?

*Abi.* Lud! how you talk!

*Tin.* This is a thundering dog.

*Abi.* What is he?

*Tin.* A private gentleman.

*Abi.* Ay! where does he live?

*Tin.* In the Horse-Guards. But he has one fault I must tell thee of; if thou canst bear with that, he's a man for thy purpose.

*Abi.* Pray, Mr Tinsel, what may that be?

*Tin.* He's but five-and-twenty years old.

*Abi.* 'Tis no matter for his age, if he has been well educated.

*Tin.* No man better, child; he'll tie a wig, toss a die, make a pass, and swear with such a grace, as would make thy heart leap to hear him.

*Abi.* Half these accomplishments will do, provided he has an estate. Pray, what has he?

*Tin.* Not a farthing.

*Abi.* Pox on him! what do I give him the hearing for? [*Aside.*

*Tin.* But as for that, I would make it up to him.

*Abi.* How?

*Tin.* Why, look ye, child, as soon as I have married thy lady, I design to discard this old prig of a steward, and to put this honest gentleman I am speaking of, into his place.

*Abi.* [*Aside.*] This fellow's a fool——I'll have no more to say to him.——Hark! my lady's a-coming.

*Tin.* Depend upon it, Nab, I'll remember my promise.

*Abi.* Ay, and so will I too, to your cost. [*Aside. Exit* ABI.

*Tin.* My dear is purely fitted up with a maid—But I shall rid the house of her.

*Enter* LADY TRUEMAN.

*Lady True.* Oh, Mr Tinsel, I am glad to meet you here. I am going to give you an entertainment that won't be disagreeable to a man of wit and pleasure of the town. There may be something diverting in a conversation between a conjurer, and this conceited ass. [*Aside.*

*Tin.* She loves me to distraction, I see that. [*Aside.*]—Prithee, widow, explain thyself.

*Lady True.* You must know, here is a strange sort of man come to town, who undertakes to free the house from this disturbance. The steward believes him a conjurer.

*Tin.* Ay, thy steward is a deep one.

*Lady True.* He's to be here immediately. It is indeed an odd figure of a man.

*Tin.* Oh, I warrant you, he has studied the black art! Ha, ha, ha! Is he not an Oxford scholar?——Widow, thy house is the most extraordinarily inhabited of any widow's this day in Christendom. I think thy four chief domestics are, a withered Abigail, a superannuated steward, a ghost, and a conjurer.

*Lady True.* [*Mimicking* TIN.] And you would have it inhabited by a fifth, who is a more extraordinary person than any of all these four.

*Tin.* 'Tis a sure sign a woman loves you, when she imitates your manner. [*Aside.*] Thou'rt very smart, my dear. But see, smoke the doctor.

*Enter* VELLUM *and* SIR GEORGE, *in his conjurer's habit.*

*Vel.* I will introduce this profound person to your ladyship, and then leave him with you—— Sir, this is her ho—nour.

*Sir Geo.* I know it well. [*Exit* VEL. [*Aside, walking in a musing posture.*] That dear woman! the sight of her unmans me. I could weep for tenderness, did not I, at the same time, feel an indignation rise in me to see that wretch with her. And yet, I cannot but smile to see her in the company of her first and second husband at the same time.

*Lady True.* Mr Tinsel, do you speak to him; you are used to the company of men of learning.

*Tin.* Old gentleman, thou dost not look like an inhabitant of this world; I suppose thou art lately come down from the stars. Pray, what news is stirring in the Zodiac?

*Sir Geo.* News that ought to make the heart of a coward tremble. Mars is now entering into the first house, and will shortly appear in all his domal dignities——

*Tin.* Mars!—Prithee, father Grey-beard, explain thyself.

*Sir Geo.* The entrance of Mars into his house, portends the entrance of a master into this family—and that soon.

*Tin.* D'ye hear that, widow? The stars have cut me out for thy husband. This house is to have a master, and that soon. Hark thee, old Gadbury? Is not Mars very like a young fellow called Tom Tinsel?

*Sir Geo.* Not so much as Venus is like this lady.

*Tin.* A word in your ear, doctor; these two planets will be in conjunction by and by; I can tell you that.

*Sir Geo.* [*Aside, walking disturbed.*] Curse on this impertinent fop! I shall scarce forbear discovering myself——Madam, I am told that your house is visited with strange noises.

*Lady True.* And I am told that you can quiet them. I must confess, I had a curiosity to see the person I had heard so much of; and indeed your aspect shows, that you have had much experience in the world. You must be a very aged man.

*Sir Geo.* My aspect deceives you: what do you think is my real age?

*Tin.* I should guess thee within three years of Methusalah. Prithee, tell me, wast thou not born before the flood?

*Lady True.* Truly, I should guess you to be in your second or third century.

*Sir Geo.* Ha, ha, ha! If there be truth in man, I was but five-and-thirty last August. Oh, the study of the occult sciences makes a man's beard grow faster than you would imagine!

*Lady True.* What an escape you have had, Mr Tinsel, that you were not bred a scholar!

*Tin.* And so I fancy, doctor, thou thinkest me an illiterate fellow, because I have a smooth chin?

*Sir Geo.* Hark ye, sir; a word in your ear. You are a coxcomb, by all the rules of physiognomy: but let that be a secret between you and me. [*Aside to* TIN.

*Lady True.* Pray, Mr Tinsel, what is it the doctor whispers?

*Tin.* Only a compliment, child, upon two or three of my features. It does not become me to repeat it.

*Lady True.* Pray, doctor, examine this gentleman's face, and tell me his fortune.

*Sir Geo.* If I may believe the lines of his face, he likes it better than I do, or—than you do, fair lady.

*Tin.* Widow, I hope now thou'rt convinced he's a cheat.

*Lady True.* For my part, I believe he's a witch——Go on, doctor.

*Sir Geo.* He will be crossed in love; and that soon.

*Tin.* Prithee, doctor, tell us the truth. Dost not thou live in Moorfields?

*Sir Geo.* Take my word for it, thou shalt never live in my lady Trueman's mansion-house.

*Tin.* Pray, old gentleman, hast thou never been plucked by the beard when thou wert saucy?

*Lady True.* Nay, Mr Tinsel, you are angry: do you think I would marry a man that dares not have his fortune told?

*Sir Geo.* Let him be angry——I matter not—He is but short-lived. He will soon die of——

*Tin.* Come, come, speak out, old Hocus; he, he, he! This fellow makes me burst with laughing. [*Forces a laugh.*

*Sir Geo.* He will soon die of a fright—or of the—let me see your nose—Ay—'tis so!

*Tin.* You son of a whore! I'll run ye through the body. I never yet made the sun shine through a conjurer.

*Lady True.* Oh, fy, Mr Tinsel! you will not kill an old man?

*Tin.* An old man! The dog says he's but five-and-thirty.

*Lady True.* Oh, fy, Mr Tinsel! I did not think you could have been so passionate! I hate a passionate man. Put up your sword, or I must never see you again.

*Tin.* Ha, ha, ha! I was but in jest, my dear. I had a mind to have made an experiment upon the doctor's body. I would but have drilled a little eyelet hole in it, and have seen whether he had art enough to close it up again.

*Sir Geo.* Courage is but ill shown before a lady. But know, if ever I meet thee again, thou shalt find this arm can wield other weapons besides this wand.

*Tin.* Ha, ha, ha!

*Lady True.* Well, learned sir, you are to give a proof of your art, not of your courage. Or, if you will shew your courage, let it be at nine o'clock—for that is the time the noise is generally heard.

*Tin.* And look ye, old gentleman, if thou dost not do thy business well, I can tell thee, by the little skill I have, that thou wilt be tossed in a blanket before ten. We'll do our endeavour to send thee back to the stars again.

*Sir Geo.* I'll go and prepare myself for the ceremonies——And, lady, as you expect they should succeed to your wishes, treat that fellow with the contempt he deserves.

[*Exit* SIR GEORGE.

*Tin.* The sauciest dog I ever talked with in my whole life!

*Lady True.* Methinks he's a diverting fellow; one may see he's no fool.

*Tin.* No fool! Ay, but thou dost not take him for a conjurer?

*Lady True.* Truly, I don't know what to take him for; I am resolved to employ him however. When a sickness is desperate, we often try remedies that we have no great faith in.

*Enter* ABIGAIL.

*Abi.* Madam, the tea is ready in the parlour, as you ordered.

*Lady True.* Come, Mr Tinsel, we may there talk of the subject more at leisure.

[*Exeunt* LADY TRUE. *and* TIN.

*Abi.* Sure never any lady had such servants as mine has! Well, If I get this thousand pounds, I hope to have some of my own. Let me see, I'll have a pretty tight girl—just such as I was ten years ago (I'm afraid I may say twenty); she shall dress me and flatter me——for I will be flattered, that's pos! My lady's cast suits will serve her after I have given them the wearing. Besides, when I am worth a thousand pounds, I shall certainly carry off the steward——Madam Vellum——how prettily that will sound! Here, bring out Madam Vellum's chaise—Nay, I do not know but it may be a chariot—It will break the attorney's wife's heart—for I shall take place of every body in the parish but my lady. If I have a son, he shall be called Fantome. But see, Mr Vellum, as I could wish. I know his humour, and will do my utmost to gain his heart.

*Enter* VELLUM, *with a pint of sack.*

*Vel.* Mrs Abigail, don't I break in upon you unseasonably?

*Abi.* Oh, no, Mr Vellum; your visits are always seasonable.

*Vel.* I have brought with me a taste of fresh canary, which, I think, is delicious.

*Abi.* Pray set it down—I have a dram-glass just by—[*Brings in a rummer.*] I'll pledge you; my lady's good health.

*Vel.* And your own with it—sweet Mrs Abigail.

*Abi.* Pray, good Mr Vellum, buy me a little parcel of this sack, and put it under the article of tea——I would not have my name appear to it.

*Vel.* Mrs Abigail, your name seldom appears in my bills—and yet——if you will allow me a merry expression—you have been always in my books, Mrs Abigail. Ha, ha, ha!

*Abi.* Ha, ha, ha! Mr Vellum, you are such a dry jesting man!

*Vel.* Why, truly, Mrs Abigail, I have been looking over my papers—and I find you have been a long time my debtor.

*Abi.* Your debtor! For what, Mr Vellum?

*Vel.* For my heart, Mrs Abigail—And our accounts will not be balanced between us, till I have yours in exchange for it. Ha, ha, ha!

*Abi.* Ha, ha, ha! You are the most gallant dun, Mr Vellum!

*Vel.* But I am not used to be paid by words only, Mrs Abigail; when will you be out of my debt?

*Abi.* Oh, Mr Vellum, you make one blush—My humble service to you.

*Vel.* I must answer you, Mrs Abigail, in the country phrase.—Your love is sufficient. Ha, ha, ha!

*Abi.* Ha, ha, ha! Well, I must own I love a merry man!

*Vel.* Let me see! how long is it, Mrs Abigail, since I first broke my mind to you?—It was, I think, *undecimo Gulielmi.*————We have conversed together these fifteen years—and yet, Mrs Abigail, I must drink to our better acquaintance. He, he, he!——Mrs Abigail, you know I am naturally jocose.

*Abi.* Ah! you men love to make sport with us silly creatures.

*Vel.* Mrs Abigail, I have a trifle about me, which I would willingly make you a present of. It is indeed but a little toy.

*Abi.* You are always exceedingly obliging.

*Vel.* It is but a little toy—scarce worth your acceptance.

*Abi.* Pray, don't keep me in suspense; what is it, Mr Vellum?

*Vel.* A silver thimble.

*Abi.* I always said Mr Vellum was a generous lover.

*Vel.* But I must put it on myself, Mrs Abigail—You have the prettiest tip of a finger—I must take the freedom to salute it.

*Abi.* Oh, fy! you make me ashamed, Mr Vellum; how can you do so? I protest I am in such a confusion———— [*A feigned struggle.*

*Vel.* This finger is not the finger of idleness; it bears the honourable scars of the needle.——But why are you so cruel as not to pair your nails?

*Abi.* Oh, I vow, you press it so hard! pray, give me my finger again.

*Vel.* This middle finger, Mrs Abigail, has a pretty neighbour—a wedding ring would become it mightily——He, he, he!

*Abi.* You're so full of your jokes. Ay; but where must I find one for it?

*Vel.* I design this thimble only as the forerunner of it; they will set off each other, and are—indeed, a twofold emblem. The first will put you in mind of being a good housewife, and the other, of being a good wife. Ha, ha, ha!

*Abi.* Yes, yes; I see you laugh at me.

*Vel.* Indeed, I am serious.

*Abi.* I thought you had quite forsaken me—I am sure you cannot forget the many repeated vows and promises you formerly made me.

*Vel.* I should as soon forget the multiplication table.

*Abi.* I have always taken your part before my lady.

*Vel.* You have so; and I have *itemed* it in my memory.

*Abi.* For I have always looked upon your interest as my own.

*Vel.* It is nothing but your cruelty can hinder them from being so.

*Abi.* I must strike while the iron's hot. [*Aside.*] —Well, Mr Vellum, there is no refusing you; you have such a bewitching tongue!

*Vel.* How? speak that again!

*Abi.* Why, then, in plain English, I love you.

*Vel.* I am overjoyed!

*Abi.* I must own my passion for you.

*Vel.* I'm transported!

[*Catching her in his arms.*

*Abi.* Dear, charming man!

*Vel.* Thou sum total of all my happiness! I shall grow extravagant! I can't forbear!—to drink thy virtuous inclinations in a bumper of sack. Your lady must make haste, my duck, or we shall provide a young steward to the estate, before she has an heir to it.—Pr'ythee, my dear, does she intend to marry Mr Tinsel?

*Abi.* Marry him, my love! No, no; we must take care of that! there would be no staying in the house for us, if she did. That young rakehell would send all the old servants a-grazing. You and I should be discarded before the honeymoon was at an end.

*Vel.* Pr'ythee, sweet one, does not this drum put the thoughts of marriage out of her head?

*Abi.* This drum, my dear, if it be well managed, will be no less than a thousand pounds in our way.

*Vel.* Ay, say'st thou so, my turtle?

*Abi.* Since we are now as good as man and wife——I mean, almost as good as man and wife ——I ought to conceal nothing from you.

*Vel.* Certainly, my dove; not from thy yokefellow, thy help-mate, thy own flesh and blood!

*Abi.* Hush! I hear Mr Tinsel's laugh; my lady and he are coming this way; if you will take a turn without, I'll tell you the whole contrivance.

*Vel.* Give me your hand, chicken.

*Abi.* Here, take it; you have my heart already.

*Vel.* We shall have much issue. [*Exeunt.*

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.

*Enter* VELLUM *and Butler.*

*Vel.* John, I have certain orders to give you—and therefore be attentive.

*But.* Attentive! Ay, let me alone for that—I suppose he means, being sober. [*Aside.*

*Vel.* You know I have always recommended to you a method in your business; I would have your knives and forks, your spoons and napkins, your plate and glasses, laid in a method.

*But.* Ay, master Vellum! you are such a sweet-spoken man, it does one's heart good to receive your orders.

*Vel.* Method, John, makes business easy; it banishes all perplexity and confusion out of families.

*But.* How he talks! I could hear him all day.

*Vel.* And now, John, let me know whether your table-linen, your side-board, your cellar, and every thing else within your province, are properly and methodically disposed for an entertainment this evening?

*But.* Master Vellum, they shall be ready at a quarter of an hour's warning. But pray, sir, is this entertainment to be made for the conjurer?

*Vel.* It is, John, for the conjurer; and yet it is not for the conjurer.

*But.* Why, look you, master Vellum, if it is for the conjurer, the cook-maid should have orders to get him some dishes to his palate. Perhaps he may like a little brimstone in his sauce.

*Vel.* This conjurer, John, is a complicated creature, an amphibious animal, a person of a twofold nature—But he eats and drinks like other men.

*But.* Marry, master Vellum, he should eat and drink as much as two other men, by the account you give of him.

*Vel.* Thy conceit is not amiss; he is indeed a double man; ha, ha, ha!

*But.* Ha! I understand you; he's one of your hermaphrodites, as they call them.

*Vel.* He is married, and he is not married—— He hath a beard, and he hath no beard. He is old, and he is young.

*But.* How charmingly he talks! I fancy, master Vellum, you could make a riddle. The same

man old and young! How do you make that out, master Vellum?

*Vel.* Thou hast heard of a snake casting his skin, and recovering his youth? Such is this sage person.

*But.* Nay, 'tis no wonder a conjurer should be like a serpent.

*Vel.* When he has thrown aside the old conjurer's slough, that hangs about him, he'll come out as fine a young gentleman as ever was seen in this house.

*But.* Does he intend to sup in his slough?

*Vel.* That, time will shew.

*But.* Well, I have not a head for these things. Indeed, Mr Vellum, I have not understood one word you have said this half hour.

*Vel.* I did not intend thou shouldst——But to our business——Let there be a table spread in the great hall. Let your pots and glasses be washed, and in a readiness. Bid the cook provide a plentiful supper; and see that all the servants are in their best liveries.

*But.* Ay, now I understand every word you say. But I would rather hear you talk a little in that t'other way.

*Vel.* I shall explain to thee what I have said, by and by—Bid Susan lay two pillows upon your lady's bed.

*But.* Two pillows! Madam won't sleep upon them both! She is not a double woman, too?

*Vel.* She will sleep upon neither. But hark! Mrs Abigail; I think I hear her chiding the cook-maid.

*But.* Then I'll away, or it will be my turn next: she, I am sure, speaks plain English; one may easily understand every word she says.

[*Exit Butler.*

*Vel.* Servants are good for nothing, unless they have an opinion of the person's understanding who has the direction of them.—But see, Mrs Abigail! she has a bewitching countenance; I wish I may not be tempted to marry her in good earnest.

*Enter* ABIGAIL.

*Abi.* Ha! Mr Vellum.

*Vel.* What brings my sweet one hither?

*Abi.* I am coming to speak to my friend behind the wainscot. It is fit, child, he should have an account of this conjurer, that he may not be surprised.

*Vel.* That would be as much as thy thousand pounds is worth.

*Abi.* I'll speak low———Walls have ears.

[*Pointing at the wainscot.*

*Vel.* But hark you, duckling! be sure you do not tell him that I am let into the secret.

*Abi.* That's a good one, indeed! as if I should ever tell what passes between you and me.

*Vel.* No, no, my child; that must not be; he, he, he! that must not be; he, he, he!

*Abi.* You will always be waggish.

*Vel.* Adieu; and let me hear the result of your conference.

*Abi.* How can you leave one so soon? I shall think it an age till I see you again.

*Vel.* Adieu, my pretty one!

*Abi.* Adieu, sweet Mr Vellum!

*Vel.* My pretty one——— [*As he is going off.*

*Abi.* Dear Mr Vellum!

*Vel.* My pretty one! [*Exit.*

*Abi.* I have him——If I can but get this thousand pounds.

[FANTOME *gives three raps upon his drum behind the wainscot.*]

*Abi.* Three raps upon the drum? the signal Mr Fantome and I agreed upon, when he had a mind to speak with me. [FANTOME *raps again.*] Very well, I hear you: come, fox, come out of your hole.

## SCENE II.

*Opens, and* FANTOME *comes out.*

*Abi.* You may leave your drum in the wardrobe, till you have occasion for it.

*Fan.* Well, Mrs Abigail, I want to hear what's doing in the world.

*Abi.* You are a very inquisitive spirit. But I must tell you, if you do not take care of yourself, you will be laid this evening.

*Fan.* I have overheard something of that matter. But let me alone for the doctor—I'll engage to give a good account of him. I am more in pain about Tinsel. When a lady's in the case, I'm more afraid of one fop than twenty conjurers.

*Abi.* To tell you truly, he presses his attacks with so much impudence, that he has made more progress with my lady in two days, than you did in two months.

*Fan.* I shall attack her in another manner, if thou canst but procure me another interview. There's nothing makes a lover so keen, as being kept in the dark.

*Abi.* Pray, no more of your distant bows, your respectful compliments———Really, Mr Fantome, you're only fit to make love across a tea-table.

*Fan.* My dear girl, I can't forbear hugging thee for thy good advice.

*Abi.* Ay, now I have some hopes of you; but, why don't you do so to my lady?

*Fan.* Child, I always thought your lady loved to be treated with respect.

*Abi.* Believe me, Mr Fantome, there is not so great a difference between woman and woman, as you imagine. You see Tinsel has nothing but his sauciness to recommend him.

*Fan.* Tinsel is too great a coxcomb to be capable of love—And let me tell thee, Abigail, a man, who is sincere in his passion, makes but a very awkward profession of it——But I'll mend my manners.

*Abi.* Ay, or you'll never gain a widow—— Come, I must tutor you a little; suppose me to be my lady; and let me see how you'll behave yourself?

*Fan.* I'm afraid, child, we han't time for such a piece of mummery.

*Abi.* Oh, it will be quickly over, if you play your part well.

*Fan.* Why then, dear Mrs Ab—I mean, my lady Trueman.

*Abi.* Ay; but you han't saluted me.

*Fan.* That's right; faith, I forgot that circumstance. [*Kisses her.*] Nectar and ambrosia!

*Abi.* That's very well——

*Fan.* How long must I be condemned to languish? when shall my sufferings have an end? My life, my happiness, my all, is wound up in you——

*Abi.* Well! why don't you squeeze my hand?

*Fan.* What! thus?

*Abi.* Thus! Ay—now throw your arm about my middle: hug me closer.—You are not afraid of hurting me! Now, pour forth a volley of rapture and nonsense, till you are out of breath.

*Fan.* Transport and ecstacy! where am I?—my life, my bliss!—I rage, I burn, I bleed, I die!

*Abi.* Go on, go on.

*Fan.* Flames and darts!——Bear me to the gloomy shade, rocks and grottos!—Flowers, zephyrs, and purling streams!

*Abi.* Oh, Mr Fantome, you have a tongue would undo a vestal! You were born for the ruin of our sex.

*Fan.* This will do, then, Abigail?

*Abi.* Ay; this is talking like a lover: though I only represent my lady, I take pleasure in hearing you. Well, o' my conscience, when a man of sense has a little dash of the coxcomb in him, no woman can resist him. Go on at this rate, and the thousand pounds is as good as in my pocket.

*Fan.* I shall think it an age, till I have an opportunity of putting this lesson in practice.

*Abi.* You may do it soon, if you make good use of your time. Mr Tinsel will be here with my lady at eight, and at nine the conjurer is to take you in hand.

*Fan.* Let me alone with both of them.

*Abi.* Well! forewarned, fore-armed. Get into your box, and I'll endeavour to dispose every thing in your favour.

[FANTOME *goes in.* *Exit* ABIGAIL.

*Enter* VELLUM.

*Vel.* Mrs Abigail is withdrawn—I was in hopes to have heard what passed between her and her invisible correspondent.

*Enter* TINSEL.

*Tin.* Vellum! Vellum!

*Vel.* [*Aside.*] Vellum! We are, methinks, very familiar! I am not used to be called so by any but their ho—nours———What would you, Mr Tinsel?

*Tin.* Let me beg a favour of thee, old gentleman.

*Vel.* What is that, good sir?

*Tin.* Prithee, run and fetch me the rent-roll of thy lady's estate.

*Vel.* The rent-roll!

*Tin.* The rent-roll! Ay, the rent-roll. Dost not understand what that means?

*Vel.* Why, have you thoughts of purchasing of it?

*Tin.* Thou hast hit it, old boy; that is my very intention.

*Vel.* The purchase will be considerable.

*Tin.* And for that reason I have bid thy lady very high—She is to have no less for it than this entire person of mine.

*Vel.* Is your whole estate personal, Mr Tinsel?—he, he, he!

*Tin.* Why, you queer old dog, you don't pretend to jest, d'ye? Look ye, Vellum, if you think of being continued my steward, you must learn to walk with your toes out.

*Vel.* [*Aside.*] An insolent companion!

*Tin.* Thou'rt confounded rich, I see, by that dangling of thy arms.

*Vel.* [*Aside.*] An ungracious bird!

*Tin.* Thou shalt lend me a couple of thousand pounds.

*Vel.* [*Aside.*] A very profligate!

*Tin.* Look ye, Vellum, I intend to be kind to you—I'll borrow some money of you.

*Vel.* I cannot but smile to consider the disappointment this young fellow will meet with; I will make myself merry with him. [*Aside.*]—And so, Mr Tinsel, you promise you will be a very kind master to me? [*Stifling a laugh.*

*Tin.* What will you give for a life in the house you live in?

*Vel.* What do you think of five hundred pounds?—Ha, ha, ha!

*Tin.* That's too little.

*Vel.* And yet it is more than I shall give you—And I will offer you two reasons for it.

*Tin.* Prithee, what are they?

*Vel.* First, because the tenement is not in your disposal; and, secondly, because it never will be in your disposal: and so fare thee well, good Mr Tinsel——Ha, ha, ha! You will pardon me for being jocular. [*Exit* VELLUM.

*Tin.* This rogue is as saucy as the conjurer: I'll be hanged if they are not a-kin!

*Enter* LADY TRUEMAN.

*Lady True.* Mr Tinsel! what, all alone? You free-thinkers are great admirers of solitude.

*Tin.* No, faith; I have been talking with thy steward; a very grotesque figure of a fellow; the very picture of one of our benchers. How can you bear his conversation?

*Lady True.* I keep him for my steward, and not my companion. He's a sober man.

*Tin.* Yes, yes; he looks like a put, a queer old dog, as ever I saw in my life: we must turn him off, widow. He cheats thee confoundedly, I see that.

*Lady True.* Indeed you're mistaken; he has always had the reputation of being a very honest man.

*Tin.* What! I suppose he goes to church?

*Lady True.* Goes to church! so do you, too, I hope.

*Tin.* I would, for once, widow, to make sure of you.

*Lady True.* Ah, Mr Tinsel! a husband, who would not continue to go thither, would quickly forget the promise he made there.

*Tin.* Faith, very innocent, and very ridiculous! Well, then, I warrant thee, widow, thou wouldst not, for the world, marry a sabbath-breaker!

*Lady True.* Truly, they generally come to a bad end. I remember the conjurer told you, you were short-lived.

*Tin.* The conjurer! Ha, ha, ha!

*Lady True.* Indeed, you're very witty!

*Tin.* Thou art the idol I adore: here must I pay my devotion—Prithee, widow, hast thou any timber upon thy estate?

*Lady True.* The most impudent fellow I ever met with! [*Aside.*

*Tin.* I take notice thou hast a great deal of old plate here in the house, widow.

*Lady True.* Mr Tinsel, you are a very observing man.

*Tin.* Thy large silver cistern would make a very good coach: and half a dozen salvers, that I saw on the sideboard, might be turned into six as pretty horses as any that appear in the ring.

*Lady True.* You have a very good fancy, Mr Tinsel! What pretty transformations you could make in my house!——But I'll see where 'twill end. [*Aside.*

*Tin.* Then, I observe, child, you have two or three services of gilt plate; we'd eat always in china, my dear.

*Lady True.* I perceive you are an excellent manager—How quickly you have taken an inventory of my goods!

*Tin.* Now, hark ye, widow; to shew you the love that I have for you——

*Lady True.* Very well; let me hear.

*Tin.* You have an old-fashioned gold caudle-cup, with a figure of a saint upon the lid on't.

*Lady True.* I have—What, then?

*Tin.* Why, look ye, I'd sell the caudle-cup with the old saint, for as much money as they'd fetch; which I would convert into a diamond-buckle, and make you a present of it.

*Lady True.* Oh, you are generous to an extravagance! But, pray, Mr Tinsel, don't dispose of my goods before you are sure of my person. I find you have taken a great affection to my moveables.

*Tin.* My dear, I love every thing that belongs to you.

*Lady True.* I see you do, sir; you need not make any protestations upon that subject.

*Tin.* Pho, pho, my dear, we are growing serious; and, let me tell you, that's the very next step to being dull.

*Lady True.* Believe me, sir, whatever you think, marriage is a serious subject.

*Tin.* For that very reason, my dear, let us run over it as fast as we can. I'll tell you a story, widow: I know a certain lady, who, considering the craziness of her husband, had, in case of mortality, engaged herself to two young fellows of my acquaintance. They grew such desperate rivals for her, while her husband was alive, that one of them pinked the other in a duel. But the good lady was no sooner a widow, but what did my dowager do? Why, faith, being a woman of honour, she married a third, to whom, it seems, she had given her first promise.

*Lady True.* And this is a true story, upon your own knowledge?

*Tin.* Every tittle, as I hope to be married, or never believe Tom Tinsel.

*Lady True.* Pray, Mr Tinsel, do you call this talking like a wit, or like a rake?

*Tin.* Nay, now you grow vapourish; thou'lt begin to fancy thou hearest the drum, by and by.

*Lady True.* If you had been here last night, about this time, you would not have been so merry.

*Tin.* About this time, say'st thou! Come, faith, for humour's sake, we'll sit down and listen.

*Lady True.* I will, if you'll promise to be serious.

*Tin.* Serious! never fear me, child; ha, ha, ha! Dost not hear him?

*Lady True.* You break your word already.

*Tin.* I'll tell thee what, now, widow—I would engage, by the help of a white sheet, and a pennyworth of link, in a dark night, to frighten you a whole country village out of their senses, and the vicar into the bargain.—[*Drum beats.*]—Hark! Hark! What noise is that? Heaven defend us! This is more than fancy.

*Lady True.* It beats more terrible than ever.

*Tin.* 'Tis very dreadful! What a dog have I been, to speak against my conscience, only to shew my parts!

*Lady True.* It comes nearer and nearer. I wish you have not angered it, by your foolish discourse.

*Tin.* Indeed, madam, I did not speak from my heart. I hope it will do me no hurt, for a little harmless raillery.

*Lady True.* Harmless, d'ye call it? It beats hard by us, as if it would break through the wall.

*Tin.* What a devil had I to do with a white sheet?

[*Scene opens, and discovers* FANTOME. Mercy on us, it appears!

*Lady True.* Oh, 'tis he! 'tis he himself! 'tis sir George! 'tis my husband! [*She faints.*

*Tin.* Now, would I give ten thousand pounds that I were in town.—[FANTOME *advances to him, drumming.*]—I beg ten thousand pardons: I'll never talk at this rate any more.—[FANTOME *still advances, drumming.*]—By my soul, sir George, I was not in earnest.—[*Falls on his knees.*]—Have compassion on my youth, and consider I am but a coxcomb.—[FANTOME *points to the door.*]—But see, he waves me off—Aye, with all my heart——What a devil had I to do with a white sheet?

[*He steals off the stage, mending his pace as the drum beats.*

*Fan.* The scoundrel is gone, and has left his mistress behind him. I'm mistaken if he makes love in this house any more. I have now only the conjurer to deal with. I don't question but I shall make his reverence scamper as fast as the lover; and then the day's my own. But the servants are coming; I must get into my cup-board.

[*He goes in.*

*Enter* ABIGAIL *and Servants.*

*Abi.* Oh, my poor lady! This wicked drum has frighted Mr Tinsel out of his wits, and my lady into a swoon. Let me bend her a little forward —She revives——Here, carry her into the fresh air, and she'll recover.—[*They carry her off.*]—This is a little barbarous to my lady; but 'tis all for her good: and I know her so well, that she would not be angry with me, if she knew what I was to get by it. And, if any of her friends should blame me for it hereafter,

I'll clap my hand upon my purse, and tell 'em,
'Twas for a thousand pounds, and Mr Vellum.

[*Exit.*

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.

*Enter* SIR GEORGE *in his conjurer's habit; the Butler marching before him, with two large candles; and the two Servants coming after him, one bringing a little table, and another a chair.*

*But.* AN'T please your worship, Mr Conjurer, the steward has given all of us orders to do whatsoever you shall bid us, and to pay you the same respect as if you were our master.

*Sir Geo.* Thou say'st well.

*Gard.* An't please your conjurership's worship, shall I set the table down here?

*Sir Geo.* Here, Peter.

*Gard.* Peter! He knows my name by his learning. [*Aside.*

*Coach.* I have brought you, reverend sir, the largest elbow-chair in the house; 'tis that the steward sits in, when he holds a court.

*Sir Geo.* Place it there.

*But.* Sir, will you please to want any thing else?

*Sir Geo.* Paper, and pen and ink.

*But.* Sir, I believe we have paper that is fit for your purpose; my lady's mourning paper, that is blacked at the edges. Would you choose to write with a crow-quill?

*Sir Geo.* There is none better.

*But.* Coachman, go fetch the paper and standish out of the little parlour.

*Coach.* [*To* GARDENER.]—Peter, prithee, do thou go along with me——I'm afraid——You know I went with you last night into the garden, when the cook-maid wanted a handful of parsley.

*But.* Why, you don't think I'll stay with the conjurer by myself?

*Gard.* Come, we'll all three go, and fetch the pen and ink together.

[*Exeunt Servants.*

*Sir Geo.* There's nothing, I see, makes such strong alliances as fear. These fellows are all entered into a confederacy against the ghost.—There must be abundance of business done in the family, at this rate. But here comes the triple-alliance. Who could have thought these three rogues could have found each of them an employment in fetching a pen and ink?

*Enter Gardener with a sheet of paper, Coachman with a standish, and Butler with a pen.*

*Gard.* Sir, there is your paper.

*Coach.* Sir, there is your standish.

*But.* Sir, there is your crow-quill pen——I'm glad I have got rid on't. [*Aside.*

*Gard.* [*Aside.*]—He forget's that he's to make a circle——Doctor, shall I help you to a bit of chalk?

*Sir Geo.* It is no matter.

*But.* Look ye, sir, I shewed you the spot, where he's heard oftenest. If your worship can but ferret him out of that old wall in the next room——

*Sir Geo.* We shall try.

*Gard.* That's right, John. His worship must let fly all his learning at that old wall.

*But.* Sir, if I was worthy to advise you, I would have a bottle of good October by me.—Shall I set a cup of old stingo at your elbow?

*Sir Geo.* I thank thee——We shall do without it.

*Gard.* John, he seems a very good-natured man for a conjurer.

*But.* I'll take this opportunity of inquiring after a bit of plate I have lost. I fancy, whilst he is in my lady's pay, one may hedge in a question or two into the bargain. Sir, sir, may I beg a word in your ear?

*Sir Geo.* What wouldst thou?

*But.* Sir, I know I need not tell you, that I lost one of my silver spoons last week.

*Sir Geo.* Marked with a swan's neck——

*But.* My lady's crest! He knows every thing. [*Aside.*]—How would your worship advise me to recover it again?

*Sir Geo.* Hum——

*But.* What must I do to come at it?

*Sir Geo.* Drink nothing but small-beer for a fortnight——

*But.* Small-beer! rot-gut!

*Sir Geo.* If thou drink'st a single drop of ale before fifteen days are expired—it is as much—as thy spoon—is worth.

*But.* I shall never recover it that way——I'll e'en buy a new one. [*Aside.*

*Coach.* D'ye mind how they whisper?

*Gard.* I'll be hanged if he be not asking him something about Nell——

*Coach.* I'll take this opportunity of putting a question to him about poor Dobbin. I fancy he could give me better counsel than the farrier.

*But.* [*To* GARDENER.]—A prodigious man! He knows every thing. Now is the time to find out thy pick-axe.

*Gard.* I have nothing to give him. Does not he expect to have his hand crossed with silver?

*Coach.* [*To* SIR GEORGE.]—Sir, may a man venture to ask you a question?

*Sir Geo.* Ask it.

*Coach.* I have a poor horse in the stable, that's bewitched——

*Sir Geo.* A bay gelding.

*Coach.* How could he know that? [*Aside.*

*Sir Geo.* Bought at Banbury.

*Coach.* Whew!—So it was, on my conscience! [*Whistles.*

*Sir Geo.* Six years old, last Lammas.

*Coach.* To a day!—[*Aside.*]—Now, sir, I would know whether the poor beast is bewitched by Goody Crouch, or Goody Fly?

*Sir Geo.* Neither.

*Coach.* Then it must be Goody Gurton; for she is the next oldest woman in the parish.

*Gard.* Hast thou done, Robin?

*Coach.* [*To* GARDENER.]—He can tell thee any thing.

*Gard.* [*To* SIR GEORGE.]—Sir, I would beg to take you a little further out of hearing.

*Sir Geo.* Speak.

*Gard.* The butler and I, Mr Doctor, were both of us in love, at the same time, with a certain person.

*Sir Geo.* A woman.

*Gard.* How could he know that? [*Aside.*

*Sir Geo.* Go on.

*Gard.* This woman has lately had two children at a birth.

*Sir Geo.* Twins.

*Gard.* Prodigious! Where could he hear that? [*Aside.*

*Sir Geo.* Proceed.

*Gard.* Now, because I used to meet her sometimes in the garden, she has laid them both—

*Sir Geo.* To thee.

*Gard.* What a power of learning he must have! he knows every thing. [*Aside.*

*Sir Geo.* Hast thou done?

*Gard.* I would desire to know, whether I am really father to them both?

*Sir Geo.* Stand before me: let me survey thee round.

[*Lays his wand upon his head, and makes him turn about.*

*Coach.* Look yonder, John, the silly dog is turning about under the conjurer's wand. If he has been saucy to him, we shall see him puffed off in a whirlwind immediately.

*Sir Geo.* Twins, dost thou say? [*Still turning him.*

*Gard.* Aye; are they both mine, d'ye think?

*Sir Geo.* Own but one of them.

*Gard.* Aye, but Mrs Abigail will have me take care of them both—she's always for the butler. If my poor master, sir George, had been alive, he would have made him go halves with me.

*Sir Geo.* What, was sir George a kind master?

*Gard.* Was he! Aye, my fellow servants will bear me witness.

*Sir Geo.* Did ye love sir George?

*But.* Every body loved him.

*Coach.* There was not a dry eye in the parish at the news of his death——

*Gard.* He was the best neighbour——

*But.* The kindest husband——

*Coach.* The truest friend to the poor——

*But.* My lady took on mightily; we all thought it would have been the death of her——

*Sir Geo.* I protest these fellows melt me—I think the time long till I am their master again, that I may be kind to them. [*Aside.*

*Enter* VELLUM.

*Vel.* Have you provided the doctor every thing he has occasion for? If so—you may depart. [*Exeunt servants.*

*Sir Geo.* I can, as yet, see no hurt in my wife's behaviour; but still have some certain pangs and doubts, that are natural to the heart of a fond man.—[*Aside.*]—Dear Vellum, I am impatient

to hear some news of my wife. How does she, after her fright?

*Vel.* It is a saying, somewhere in my lord Coke, that a widow———

*Sir Geo.* I ask of my wife, and thou talkest to me of my lord Coke—Prithee, tell me how she does, for I am in pain for her?

*Vel.* She is pretty well recovered. Mrs Abigail has put her in good heart; and I have given her great hopes from your skill.

*Sir Geo.* That, I think, cannot fail, since thou hast got this secret out of Abigail. But I could not have thought my friend Fantome would have served me thus.

*Vel.* You will still fancy you are a living man.

*Sir Geo.* That he should endeavour to ensnare my wife———

*Vel.* You have no right in her after your demise. Death extinguishes all property—*Quoad hanc*—It is a maxim in the law.

*Sir Geo.* A pox on your learning! Well, but what is become of Tinsel?

*Vel.* He rushed out of the house, called for his horse, clapped spurs to his sides, and was out of sight in less time than I can call ten.

*Sir Geo.* This is whimsical enough! My wife will have a quick succession of lovers in one day. Fantome has driven out Tinsel, and I shall drive out Fantome.

*Vel.* Even as one wedge driveth out another—He, he, he! You must pardon me for being jocular.

*Sir Geo.* Was there ever such a provoking blockhead! But he means me well—You must remember, Vellum, you have abundance of business upon your hands; and I have but just time to tell it you over. All I require of you is dispatch; therefore, hear me.

*Vel.* There is nothing more requisite in business than dispatch———

*Sir Geo.* Then, hear me.

*Vel.* It is, indeed, the life of business——

*Sir Geo.* Hear me, then, I say.

*Vel.* And, as one hath rightly observed, the benefit that attends it is four-fold. First——

*Sir Geo.* There is no bearing this. Thou art going to describe dispatch, when thou shouldst be practising it.

*Vel.* But your ho—nour will not give me the hearing——

*Sir Geo.* Thou wilt not give me the hearing. [*Angrily.*

*Vel.* I am still.

*Sir Geo.* In the first place, you are to lay my wig, hat, and sword, ready for me in the closet, and one of my scarlet coats. You know how Abigail has described the ghost to you.

*Vel.* It shall be done.

*Sir Geo.* Then you must remember, whilst I am laying this ghost, you are to prepare my wife for the reception of her real husband. Tell her the whole story, and do it with all the art you are master of, that the surprise may not be too great for her.

*Vel.* It shall be done. But since her ho—nour has seen this apparition, she desires to see you once more, before you encounter it.

*Sir Geo.* I shall expect her impatiently; for now I can talk to her without being interrupted by that impertinent rogue, Tinsel. I hope thou hast not told Abigail any thing of the secret?

*Vel.* Mrs Abigail is a woman; there are many reasons why she should not be acquainted with it: I shall only mention six——

*Sir Geo.* Hush, here she comes! Oh, my heart!

*Enter* LADY TRUEMAN *and* ABIGAIL.

*Sir Geo.* [*Aside, while* VELLUM *talks in dumb shew to* LADY TRUEMAN.] Oh, that loved woman! How I long to take her in my arms! If I find I am still dear to her memory, it will be a return to life indeed! But I must take care of indulging this tenderness, and put on a behaviour more suitable to my present character.

[*Walks at a distance in a pensive posture, waving his wand.*

*Lady True.* [*To* VELLUM.] This is surprising indeed! So all the servants tell me; they say he knows every thing that has happened in the family.

*Abi.* [*Aside.*] A parcel of credulous fools! they first tell him their secrets, and then wonder how he comes to know them.

[*Exit* VELLUM, *exchanging fond looks with* ABIGAIL.

*Lady True.* Learned sir, may I have some conversation with you, before you begin your ceremonies?

*Sir Geo.* Speak—But hold—First, let me feel your pulse.

*Lady True.* What can you learn from that?

*Sir Geo.* I have already learned a secret from it, that will astonish you.

*Lady True.* Pray, what is it?

*Sir Geo.* You will have a husband within this half hour.

*Abi.* [*Aside.*] I am glad to hear that—He must mean Mr Fantome. I begin to think there's a good deal of truth in his art.

*Lady True.* Alas! I fear you mean I shall see sir George's apparition a second time.

*Sir Geo.* Have courage; you shall see the apparition no more. The husband I mention, shall be as much alive as I am.

*Abi.* Mr Fantome, to be sure. [*Aside.*

*Lady True.* Impossible; I loved my first too well.

*Sir Geo.* You could not love the first better than you will love the second.

*Lady True.* Alas! you did not know sir George!

*Sir Geo.* As well as I do myself——I saw him

with you in the red damask room, when he first made love to you; your mother left you together, under pretence of receiving a visit from Mrs Hawthorn, on her return from London.

*Lady True.* This is astonishing!

*Sir Geo.* You were a great admirer of a single life for the first half hour; your refusals then grew still fainter and fainter. With what ecstacy did sir George kiss your hand, when you told him you should always follow the advice of your mamma!

*Lady True.* Every circumstance to a tittle!

*Sir Geo.* Then, lady, the wedding-night! I saw you in your white satin night-gown. You would not come out of your dressing-room, till sir George took you out by force. He drew you gently by the hand——You struggled——but he was too strong for you——You blushed; he——

*Lady True.* Oh, stop there! go no further—He knows every thing! [*Aside.*

*Abi.* Truly, Mr Conjurer, I believe you have been a wag in your youth.

*Sir Geo.* Mrs Abigail, you know what your good word cost sir George; a purse of broad pieces, Mrs Abigail.

*Abi.* The devil's in him! [*Aside.*] Pray, sir, since you have told so far, you should tell my lady, that I refused to take them.

*Sir Geo.* 'Tis true, child; he was forced to thrust them into your bosom.

*Abi.* This rogue will mention the thousand pounds, if I don't take care. [*Aside.*] Pray, sir, though you are a conjurer, methinks you need not be a blab.

*Lady True.* Sir, since I have now no reason to doubt your art, I must beseech you to treat this apparition gently. It has the resemblance of my deceased husband. If there be any undiscovered secret, any thing that troubles his rest, learn it of him.

*Sir Geo.* I must, to that end, be sincerely informed by you, whether your heart be engaged to another.—Have not you received the addresses of many lovers since his death?

*Lady True.* I have been obliged to receive more visits than have been agreeable.

*Sir Geo.* Was not Tinsel welcome?—I'm afraid to hear an answer to my own question. [*Aside.*

*Lady True.* He was well recommended.

*Sir Geo.* Racks! [*Aside.*

*Lady True.* Of a good family.

*Sir Geo.* Tortures! [*Aside.*

*Lady True.* Heir to a considerable estate.

*Sir Geo.* Death! [*Aside.*] And you still love him?——I'm distracted! [*Aside.*

*Lady True.* No, I despise him. I found he had a design upon my fortune; was base, profligate, cowardly, and every thing that could be expected from a man of the vilest principles.

*Sir Geo.* I'm recovered. [*Aside.*

*Abi.* Oh, madam, had you seen how like a scoundrel he looked, when he left your ladyship in a swoon! Where have you left my lady? says I. In an elbow-chair, child, says he. And where are you going? says I. To town, child, says he; for, to tell thee truly, child, says he, I don't care for living under the same roof with the devil, says he.

*Sir Geo.* Well, lady, I see nothing in all this, that may hinder sir George's spirit from being at rest.

*Lady True.* If he knows any thing of what passes in my heart, he cannot but be satisfied of that fondness which I bear to his memory. My sorrow for him is always fresh, when I think of him. He was the kindest, truest, tenderest—— Tears will not let me go on————

*Sir Geo.* This quite overpowers me!—I shall discover myself before my time. [*Aside.*] Madam, you may now retire, and leave me to myself.

*Lady True.* Success attend you!

*Abi.* I wish Mr Fantome gets well off from this old Don—I know he'll be with him immediately.

[*Exeunt* LADY TRUEMAN *and* ABIGAIL.

*Sir Geo.* My heart is now at ease!—she is the same dear woman I left her. Now for my revenge upon Fantome! I shall cut the ceremonies short—A few words will do his business.—Now, let me seat myself in form—A good easy chair for a conjurer this—Now for a few mathematical scratches—A good lucky scrawl that—Faith, I think it looks very astrological—These two or three magical pot-hooks about it, make it a complete conjurer's scheme. [*Drum beats.*] Ha, ha, ha! sir, are you there? Enter, drummer—Now must I pore upon my paper.

*Enter* FANTOME, *beating his drum.*

Pr'ythee, don't make a noise; I'm busy. [FANTOME *beats.*] A pretty march! Pr'ythee beat that over again. [*He beats and advances.*] [*Rising.*] Ha! you're very perfect in the step of a ghost. You stalk it majestically. [FANTOME *advances.*] How the rogue stares! he acts it to admiration! I'll be hanged if he has not been practising this half hour in Mrs Abigail's wardrobe! [FANTOME *stares, gives a rap with his drum.*] Pr'ythee, don't play the fool. [FANTOME *beats.*] Nay, nay; enough of this, good Mr Fantome.

*Fan.* [*Aside.*] Death! I am discovered. This jade, Abigail, has betrayed me.

*Sir Geo.* Mr Fantome, upon the word of an astrologer, your thousand pound bribe will never gain my lady Trueman.

*Fan.* 'Tis plain, she has told him all. [*Aside.*

*Sir Geo.* Let me advise you to make off as fast as you can, or I plainly perceive by my art, Mr Ghost will have his bones broke.

*Fan.* [*To* SIR GEORGE.] Look ye, old gentleman, I perceive you have learned this secret from Mrs Abigail.

*Sir Geo.* I have learned it from my art.

*Fan.* Thy art! prithee, no more of that.—— Look ye, I know you are a cheat as much as I am. And if thou'lt keep my counsel, I'll give thee ten broad pieces.

*Sir Geo.* I am not mercenary. Young man, I scorn thy gold.

*Fan.* I'll make them up twenty——

*Sir Geo.* Avaunt! and that quickly, or I'll raise such an apparition as shall——

*Fan.* An apparition, old gentleman! you mistake your man; I'm not to be frighted with bugbears!

*Sir Geo.* Let me retire but for a few moments, and I will give thee such a proof of my art——

*Fan.* Why, if thou hast any *hocus-pocus* tricks to play, why canst thou not do them here?

*Sir Geo.* The raising of a spirit requires certain secret mysteries to be performed, and words to be muttered in private——

*Fan.* Well, if I see through your trick, will you promise to be my friend?

*Sir Geo.* I will——Attend and tremble! [*Exit.*

*Fan.* A very solemn old ass! but I smoke him—he has a mind to raise his price upon me. I could not think this slut would have used me thus. I begin to grow horribly tired of my drum. I wish I was well rid of it. However, I have got this by it, that it has driven off Tinsel for good and all: I shan't have the mortification to see my mistress carried off by such a rival.—— Well, whatever happens, I must stop this old fellow's mouth; I must not be sparing in hush-money. But here he comes.

*Enter* SIR GEORGE *in his own habit.*

Ha! what's that! Sir George Trueman! This can be no counterfeit. His dress, his shape, his face, the very wound of which he died! Nay, then, 'tis time to decamp. [*Runs off.*

*Sir Geo.* Ha, ha, ha! Fare you well, good sir George. The enemy has left me master of the field; here are the marks of my victory. This drum will I hang up in my great hall, as the trophy of the day.

*Enter* ABIGAIL.—SIR GEORGE *stands with his hand before his face, in a musing posture.*

*Abi.* Yonder he is. O' my conscience, he has driven off the conjurer! Mr Fantome, Mr Fantome! I give you joy, I give you joy! What do you think of your thousand pounds now? Why does not the man speak?

[*Pulls him by the sleeve.*

*Sir Geo.* Ha!

[*Taking his hands from his face.*

*Abi.* Oh 'tis my master! [*Shrieks.*

[*Running away, he catches her.*

*Sir Geo.* Good Mrs Abigail, not so fast.

*Abi.* Are you alive, sir? He has given my shoulder such a cursed tweak! they must be real fingers; I feel them, I'm sure.

*Sir Geo.* What dost thou think?

*Abi.* Think, sir! think!—Troth I don't know what to think. Pray, sir, how——

*Sir Geo.* No questions, good Abigail; thy curiosity shall be satisfied in due time. Where's your lady?

*Abi.* Oh, I'm so frighted—and so glad—

*Sir Geo.* Where's your lady, I ask you?

*Abi.* Marry, I don't know where I am myself—I can't forbear weeping for joy——

*Sir Geo.* Your lady? I say, your lady? I must bring you to yourself with one pinch more.

*Abi.* Oh, she has been talking a good while with the steward.

*Sir Geo.* Then he has opened the whole story to her. I'm glad he has prepared her. Oh, here she comes!

*Enter* LADY TRUEMAN, *followed by* VELLUM.

*Lady True.* Where is he? Let me fly into his arms! my life! my soul! my husband!

*Sir Geo.* Oh, let me catch thee to my heart, dearest of women!

*Lady True.* Are you, then, still alive, and are you here! I can scarce believe my senses! Now am I happy indeed!

*Sir Geo.* My heart is too full to answer thee.

*Lady True.* Was ever woman so blessed! to find again the darling of her soul, when she thought him lost for ever! to enter into a kind of second marriage with the only man, whom she was ever capable of loving!

*Sir Geo.* May it be as happy as our first! I desire no more. Believe me, my dear, I want words to express those transports of joy and tenderness, which are every moment rising in my heart whilst I speak to thee.

*Enter Servants.*

*But.* Just as the steward told us, lads! Look you there, if he ben't with my lady already!

*Gard.* He, he, he! what a joyful night will this be for madam.

*Coach.* As I was coming in at the gate, a strange gentleman whisked by me; but he took to his heels, and made away to the George. If I did not see master before me, I should have sworn it had been his honour!

*Gard.* Hast thou given orders for the bells to be set a ringing?

*Coach.* Never trouble thy head about that; it is done.

*Sir Geo.* [*To* LADY TRUEMAN.] My dear, I long as much to tell you my whole story, as you do to hear it. In the mean while, I am to look upon this as my wedding-day. I'll have nothing but the voice of mirth and feasting in my house. My poor neighbours and my servants shall rejoice with me. My hall shall be free to every one, and let my cellars be thrown open.

*But.* Ah, bless your honour, may you never die again!

*Coach.* The same good man that he ever was.

*Gard.* Whurra!

*Sir Geo.* Vellum, thou hast done me much service to-day. I know thou lovest Abigail; but she's disappointed in a fortune. I'll make it up to both of you. I'll give thee a thousand pounds with her. It is not fit there should be one sad heart in my house to-night.

*Abi.* Mr Vellum, you are a well-spoken man: pray, do you thank my master and my lady.

*Sir Geo.* Vellum, I hope you are not displeased with the gift I make you?

*Vel.* The gift is two-fold. I receive from you
A virtuous partner, and a portion, too;
For which, in humble wise, I thank the donours:
And so we bid good-night to both your ho—nours.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

# A BOLD STROKE FOR A WIFE.

BY

*MRS CENTLIVRE.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### MEN.

COLONEL FAINWELL, *in love with* MRS LOVELY.
SIR PHILIP MODELOVE, *an old beau.*
PERIWINKLE, *a kind of silly virtuoso.*
TRADELOVE, *a change broker.*
OBADIAH PRIM, *a quaker hosier.*
FREEMAN, *the colonel's friend, a merchant.*
SIMON PURE, *a quaking preacher.*
MR SACKBUT, *a vintner.*

### WOMEN.

MRS LOVELY, *a fortune of thirty thousand pounds.*
MRS PRIM, *wife to* PRIM *the hosier.*
BETTY, *servant to* MRS LOVELY.

*Scene—London.*

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—*A tavern.*

COLONEL FAINWELL *and* FREEMAN *over a bottle.*

*Free.* COME, colonel, his majesty's health. You are as melancholy as if you were in love! I wish some of the beauties of Bath han't snapt your heart.

*Col.* Why, faith, Freeman, there is something in't; I have seen a lady at Bath, who has kindled such a flame in me, that all the waters there can't quench.

*Free.* Women, like some poisonous animals, carry their antidote about them——Is she not to be had, colonel?

*Col.* That's a difficult question to answer; however, I resolve to try: perhaps you may be able to serve me; you merchants know one another. The lady told me herself she was under the charge of four persons.

*Free.* Odso! 'tis Mrs Anne Lovely.

*Col.* The same—Do you know her?

*Free.* Know her! ay——Faith, colonel, your condition is more desperate than you imagine: why, she is the talk and pity of the whole town; and it is the opinion of the learned, that she must die a maid.

*Col.* Say you so? That's somewhat odd, in this charitable city. She's a woman, I hope?

*Free.* For aught I know—but it had been as well for her, had nature made her any other part of the creation. The man who keeps this house served her father; he is a very honest fellow, and may be of use to you; we'll send for him to take a glass with us: he'll give you her whole history, and 'tis worth your hearing.

*Col.* But may one trust him?

*Free.* With your life: I have obligations enough upon him to make him do any thing: I serve him with wine. [*Knocks.*

*Col.* Nay, I know him very well myself. I once used to frequent a club that was kept here.

*Enter Drawer.*

*Draw.* Gentlemen, d'ye call?

*Free.* Ay; send up your master.

*Draw.* Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

*Col.* Do you know any of this lady's guardians, Freeman?

*Free.* Yes, I know two of them very well.

*Enter* SACKBUT.

Here comes one will give you an account of them all. Mr Sackbut, we sent for you to take a glass with us. 'Tis a maxim among the friends of the bottle, that as long as the master is in company, one may be sure of good wine.

*Sack.* Sir, you shall be sure to have as good wine as you send in. Colonel, your most humble servant; you are welcome to town.

*Col.* I thank you, Mr Sackbut.

*Sack.* I am as glad to see you as I should a hundred tun of French claret, custom free. My service to you, sir. [*Drinks.*] You don't look so merry as you used to do; arn't you well, colonel?

*Free.* He has got a woman in his head, landlord; can you help him?

*Sack.* If 'tis in my power, I shan't scruple to serve my friend.

*Col.* 'Tis one perquisite of your calling.

*Sack.* Aye, at t'other end of the town, where you officers use, women are good forcers of trade; a well-customed house, a handsome bar-keeper, with clean, obliging drawers, soon get the master an estate; but our citizens seldom do any thing but cheat within the walls. But as to the lady, colonel; point you at particulars? or have you a good Champagne stomach? Are you in full pay, or reduced, colonel?

*Col.* Reduced, reduced, landlord.

*Free.* To the miserable condition of a lover!

*Sack.* Pish! that's preferable to half-pay; a woman's resolution may break before the peace: push her home, colonel; there's no parlying with the fair sex.

*Col.* Were the lady her own mistress, I have some reasons to believe I should soon command in chief.

*Free.* You know Mrs Lovely, Mr Sackbut?

*Sack.* Know her! Aye, poor Nancy: I have carried her to school many a frosty morning.—Alas! if she's the woman, I pity you, colonel: her father, my old master, was the most whimsical, out-of-the-way tempered man I ever heard of, as you will guess by his last will and testament. This was his only child: and I have heard him wish her dead a thousand times.

*Col.* Why so?

*Sack.* He hated posterity, you must know, and wished the world were to expire with himself.—He used to swear, if she had been a boy, he would have qualified him for the opera.

*Free.* 'Twas a very unnatural resolution in a father.

*Sack.* He died worth thirty thousand pounds, which he left to his daughter, provided she married with the consent of her guardians; but that she might be sure never to do so, he left her in the care of four men, as opposite to each other as the four elements; each has his quarterly rule, and three months in a year she is obliged to be subject to each of their humours, and they are pretty different, I assure you. She is just come from Bath.

*Col.* 'Twas there I saw her.

*Sack.* Aye, sir; the last quarter was her beau guardian's. She appears in all public places during his reign.

*Col.* She visited a lady who boarded in the same house with me: I liked her person, and found an opportunity to tell her so. She replied, she had no objection to mine; but if I could not reconcile contradictions, I must not think of her; for that she was condemned to the caprice of four persons, who never yet agreed in any one thing, and she was obliged to please them all.

*Sack.* 'Tis most true, sir; I'll give you a short description of the men, and leave you to judge of the poor lady's condition. One is a kind of virtuoso; a silly, half-witted fellow, but positive and surly, fond of every thing antique and foreign, and wears his clothes of the fashion of the last century; doats upon travellers, and believes more of sir John Mandeville than he does of the Bible.

*Col.* That must be a rare odd fellow!

*Sack.* Another is a 'Change-broker; a fellow that will out-lye the devil for the advantage of stock, and cheat his father that got him, in a bargain: he is a great stickler for trade, and hates every man that wears a sword.

*Free.* He is a great admirer of the Dutch management, and swears they understand trade better than any nation under the sun.

*Sack.* The third is an old beau, that has May in his fancy and dress, but December in his face and his heels: he admires all the new fashions, and those must be French; loves operas, balls, masquerades, and is always the most tawdry of the whole company on a birth-day.

*Col.* These are pretty opposite to one another, truly; and the fourth, what is he, landlord?

*Sack.* A very rigid quaker, whose quarter began this day. I saw Mrs Lovely go in, not above two hours ago—sir Philip set her down.—What think you now, colonel; is not the poor lady to be pitied?

*Col.* Aye, and rescued too, landlord.

*Free.* In my opinion, that's impossible.

*Col.* There is nothing impossible to a lover.—What would not a man attempt for a fine woman and thirty thousand pounds? Besides, my honour is at stake; I promised to deliver her, and she bid me win her and wear her.

*Sack.* That's fair, faith.

*Free.* If it depended upon knight-errantry, I should not doubt your setting free the damsel; but to have avarice, impertinence, hypocrisy, and pride, at once to deal with, requires more

cunning than generally attends a man of honour.

*Col.* My fancy tells me I shall come off with glory. I am resolved to try, however. Do you know all the guardians, Mr Sackbut?

*Sack.* Very well, sir; they all use my house.

*Col.* And will you assist me, if occasion requires?

*Sack.* In every thing I can, colonel.

*Free.* I'll answer for him; and whatever I can serve you in, you may depend on. I know Mr Periwinkle and Mr Tradelove; the latter has a very great opinion of my interest abroad. I happened to have a letter from a correspondent two hours before the news arrived of the French king's death: I communicated it to him: upon which he bought all the stock he could, and what with that, and some wagers he laid, he told me he had got to the tune of five hundred pounds; so that I am much in his good graces.

*Col.* I don't know but you may be of service to me, Freeman.

*Free.* If I can, command me, colonel.

*Col.* Isn't it possible to find a suit of clothes ready made at some of these sale-shops fit to rig out a beau, think you, Mr Sackbut?

*Sack.* O, hang them—No, colonel; they keep nothing ready made that a gentleman would be seen in: but I can fit you with a suit of clothes, if you'd make a figure—Velvet and gold brocade—They were pawned to me by a French count, who had been stript at play, and wanted money to carry him home; he promised to send for them, but I have not heard any thing of him.

*Free.* He has not fed upon frogs long enough yet to recover his loss; ha, ha!

*Col.* Ha, ha! Well, the clothes will do, Mr Sackbut; though we must have three or four fellows in tawdry liveries: they can be procured, I hope?

*Free.* Egad! I have a brother come from the West Indies that can match you; and, for expedition-sake, you shall have his servants: there's a black, a tawney-moor, and a Frenchman; they don't speak one word of English, so can make no mistake.

*Col.* Excellent! Egad! I shall look like an Indian prince. First, I'll attack my beau guardian; where lives he?

*Sack.* Faith, somewhere about St James; though, to say in what street, I cannot; but any chairman will tell you where sir Philip Modelove lives.

*Free.* Oh! you'll find him in the Park at eleven every day; at least, I never pass through at that hour without seeing him there. But what do you intend?

*Col.* To address him in his own way, and find what he designs to do with the lady.

*Free.* And what then?

*Col.* Nay, that I cannot tell; but I shall take my measures accordingly.

*Sack.* Well, 'tis a mad undertaking, in my mind: but here's to your success, colonel.

[*Drinks.*

*Col.* 'Tis something out of the way, I confess; but fortune may chance to smile, and I succeed. Come, landlord, let me see those clothes. Freeman, I shall expect you'll leave word with Mr Sackbut where one may find you upon occasion; and send my Indian equipage immediately; d'ye hear?

*Free.* Immediately. [*Exit.*

*Col.* Bold was the man who ventured first to sea,
But the first venturing lovers bolder were.
The path of love's a dark and dangerous way,
Without a landmark, or one friendly star,
And he that runs the risque deserves the fair.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—PRIM'S *house.*

*Enter* MRS LOVELY, *and her maid* BETTY.

*Bet.* Bless me, madam! Why do you fret and tease yourself so? This is giving them the advantage, with a witness.

*Mrs Love.* Must I be condemned all my life to the preposterous humours of other people, and pointed at by every boy in town? Oh! I could tear my flesh, and curse the hour I was born—Isn't it monstrously ridiculous, that they should desire to impose their quaking dress upon me at these years? When I was a child, no matter what they made me wear; but now——

*Bet.* I would resolve against it, madam; I'd see them hanged before I'd put on the pinched cap again.

*Mrs Love.* Then I must never expect one moment's ease: she has rung such a peal in my ears already, that I shan't have the right use of them this month. What can I do?

*Bet.* What can you not do, if you will but give your mind to it? Marry, madam.

*Mrs Love.* What! and have my fortune go to build churches and hospitals?

*Bet.* Why, let it go. If the colonel loves you, as he pretends, he'll marry you without a fortune, madam; and, I assure you, a colonel's lady is no despicable thing; a colonel's post will maintain you like a gentlewoman, madam.

*Mrs Love.* So, you would advise me to give up my own fortune, and throw myself upon the colonel's?

*Bet.* I would advise you to make yourself easy, madam.

*Mrs Love.* That's not the way, I'm sure. No, no, girl; there are certain ingredients to be mingled with matrimony, without which I may as well change for the worse as the better. When the woman has fortune enough to make the man happy, if he has either honour or good manners, he'll make her easy. Love makes but a slovenly figure in a house, where poverty keeps the door.

*Bet.* And so you resolve to die a maid, do you, madam?

*Mrs Love.* Or have it in my power to make the man I love master of my fortune.

*Bet.* Then you don't like the colonel so well as I thought you did, madam, or you would not take such a resolution.

*Mrs Love.* It is because I do like him, Betty, that I do take such a resolution.

*Bet.* Why, do you expect, madam, the colonel can work miracles? Is it possible for him to marry you with the consent of all your guardians?

*Mrs Love.* Or he must not marry me at all: and so I told him; and he did not seem displeased with the news. He promised to set me free; and I, on that condition, promised to make him master of that freedom.

*Bet.* Well! I have read of enchanted castles, ladies delivered from the chains of magic, giants killed, and monsters overcome; so that I shall be the less surprised if the colonel should conjure you out of the power of your four guardians; if he does, I am sure he deserves your fortune.

*Mrs Love.* And shall have it, girl, if it were ten times as much—For I'll ingenuously confess to thee, that I do like the colonel above all the men I ever saw: there's something so *jantée* in a soldier, a kind of *je ne sçai quoi* air, that makes them more agreeable than the rest of mankind. They command regard, as who shall say, We are your defenders. We preserve your beauties from the insults of rude and unpolished foes, and ought to be preferred before those lazy, indolent mortals, who, by dropping into their fathers' estates, set up their coaches, and think to rattle themselves into our affections.

*Bet.* Nay, madam, I confess that the army has engrossed all the prettiest fellows—a laced coat and a feather have irresistible charms.

*Mrs Love.* But the colonel has all the beauties of the mind, as well as the body. O all ye powers that favour happy lovers, grant that he may be mine! Thou god of love, if thou be'st aught but name, assist my Fainwell!

Point all thy darts to aid his just design,
And make his plots as prevalent as thine.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.—*The Park.*

*Enter* COLONEL, *finely drest, three Footmen after him.*

*Col.* So, now if I can but meet this beau! Egad! Methinks, I cut a smart figure, and have as much of the tawdry air as any Italian count or French marquis of them all. Sure, I shall know this knight again——Ah! Yonder he sits, making love to a mask, i'faith! I'll walk up the Mall, and come down by him.

[*Exit* COLONEL.

*Scene draws, and discovers* SIR PHILIP *upon a bench, with a woman masked.*

*Sir Phi.* Well, but, my dear, are you really constant to your keeper?

*Wom.* Yes, really, sir. Hey-day! Who comes yonder? He cuts a mighty figure.

*Sir Phi.* Ha! A stranger, by his equipage keeping so close at his heels. He has the appearance of a man of quality. Positively French, by his dancing air!

*Wom.* He crosses, as if he meant to sit down here.

*Sir Phi.* He has a mind to make love to thee, child.

*Enter* COLONEL, *and seats himself upon the bench by* SIR PHILIP.

*Wom.* It will be to no purpose, if he does.

*Sir Phi.* Are you resolved to be cruel, then?

*Col.* You must be very cruel indeed, if you can deny any thing to so fine a gentleman, madam. [*Takes out his watch.*

*Wom.* I never mind the outside of a man.

*Col.* And I'm afraid thou art no judge of the inside.

*Sir Phi.* I am positively of your mind, sir; for creatures of her function seldom penetrate beyond the pocket.

*Wom.* Creatures of your composition, have, indeed, generally more in their pockets, than in their heads. [*Aside.*

*Sir Phi.* Pray, what says your watch? mine is down. [*Pulling out his watch.*

*Col.* I want thirty-six minutes of twelve, sir.

[*Puts up his watch, and takes out his snuff-box.*

*Sir Phi.* May I presume, sir?

*Col.* Sir, you honour me.

[*Presenting the box.*

*Sir Phi.* He speaks good English—though he must be a foreigner.—[*Aside.*]—This snuff is extremely good—and the box prodigious fine; the work is French, I presume, sir?

*Col.* I bought it in Paris, sir—I do think the workmanship pretty neat.

*Sir Phi.* Neat! 'tis exquisitely fine, sir. Pray, sir, if I may take the liberty of inquiring—What country is so happy to claim the birth of the finest gentleman in the universe? France, I presume?

*Col.* Then you don't think me an Englishman?

*Sir Phi.* No, upon my soul, don't I.

*Col.* I'm sorry for't.

*Sir Phi.* Impossible, you should wish to be an Englishman! Pardon me, sir, this island could not produce a person of such alertness.

*Col.* As this mirror shews you, sir.

[*Puts up a pocket glass to* SIR PHILIP'S *face.*

*Wom.* Coxcombs! I'm sick to hear them praise one another. One seldom gets any thing by such animals; not even a dinner, unless one can dine upon soup and celery.

*Sir Phi.* O Gad, sir? Will you leave us, madam? Ha, ha, ha! [*Exit Woman.*

*Col.* She fears 'twill be only losing time to stay here, ha, ha, ha! I know not how to distinguish you, sir; but your mien and address speak you right honourable.

*Sir Phi.* Thus, great souls judge of others by themselves—I am only adorned with knighthood, that's all, I assure you, sir; my name is sir Philip Modelove.

*Col.* Of French extraction?

*Sir Phi.* My father was French.

*Col.* One may plainly perceive it—There is a certain gaiety peculiar to my nation (for I will own myself a Frenchman) which distinguishes us every where—A person of your figure would be a vast addition to a coronet.

*Sir Phi.* I must own I had the offer of a barony about five years ago; but I abhorred the fatigue which must have attended it. I could never yet bring myself to join with either party.

*Col.* You are perfectly in the right, Sir Philip—a fine person should not embark himself in the slovenly concern of politics: dress and pleasure are objects proper for the soul of a fine gentleman.

*Sir Phi.* And love—

*Col.* Oh! that's included under the article of pleasure.

*Sir Phi.* Parbleu il est un homme d'esprit! I must embrace you—[*Rise and embrace.*]—Your sentiments are so agreeable to mine, that we appear to have but one soul, for our ideas and conceptions are the same.

*Col.* I should be sorry for that. [*Aside.*]—You do me too much honour, sir Philip.

*Sir Phi.* Your vivacity and jantee mien assured me, at first sight, there was nothing of this foggy island in your composition. May I crave your name, sir?

*Col.* My name is La Fainwell, sir, at your service.

*Sir Phi.* The La Fainwells are French, I know; though the name is become very numerous in Great-Britain of late years—I was sure you was French the moment I laid my eyes upon you; I could not come into the supposition of your being an Englishman: this island produces few such ornaments.

*Col.* Pardon me, sir Philip; this island has two things superior to all nations under the sun.

*Sir Phi.* Ah! what are they?

*Col.* The ladies, and the laws.

*Sir Phi.* The laws, indeed, do claim a preference of other nations—but, by my soul, there are fine women every where.—I must own I have felt their power in all countries.

*Col.* There are some finished beauties, I confess, in France, Italy, Germany, nay, even in Holland, mais elles sont bien rare: but les belles Angloises! Oh, sir Philip, where find we such women! such symmetry of shape! such elegance of dress! such regularity of features! such sweetness of temper! such commanding eyes! and such bewitching smiles!

*Sir Phi.* Ah! parbleu vous etes attrapé.

*Col.* Non, je vous assure, Chevalier.—But I declare there is no amusement so agreeable to my goût as the conversation of a fine woman.——I could never be prevailed upon to enter into what the vulgar call the pleasure of the bottle.

*Sir Phi.* My own taste, positivement.—A ball, or a masquerade, is certainly preferable to all the productions of the vineyard.

*Col.* Infinitely! I hope the people of quality in England will support that branch of pleasure which was imported with the peace, and since naturalized by the ingenious Mr. Heidegger.

*Sir Phi.* The ladies assure me it will become part of the constitution—upon which I subscribed a hundred guineas—It will be of great service to the public, at least to the company of surgeons; and the city in general.

*Col.* Ha, ha! it may help to ennoble the blood of the city. Are you married, sir Philip?

*Sir Phi.* No; nor do I believe I ever shall enter into that honourable state: I have an absolute tendre for the whole sex.

*Col.* That's more than they have for you, I dare swear. [*Aside.*

*Sir Phi.* And I have the honour to be very well with the ladies, I can assure you, sir; and I won't affront a million of fine women to make one happy.

*Col.* Nay, marriage is reducing a man's taste to a kind of half pleasure: but then it carries the blessings of peace along with it; one goes to sleep without fear, and wakes without pain.

*Sir Phi.* There's something of that in't; a wife is a very good dish for an English stomach,—but gross feeding for nicer palates, ha, ha, ha!

*Col.* I find I was very much mistaken—I imagined you had been married to that young lady, whom I saw in the chariot with you this morning in Grace-church-Street.

*Sir Phi.* Who, Nancy Lovely? I am a piece of a guardian to that lady: you must know, her father, I thank him, joined me with three of the most preposterous old fellows—that, upon my soul, I am in pain for the poor girl:——she must certainly lead apes, as the saying is; ha, ha!

*Col.* That's pity, sir Philip. If the lady would

give me leave, I would endeavour to avert that curse.

*Sir Phi.* As to the lady, she'd gladly be rid of us at any rate, I believe; but here's the mischief! he who marries Miss Lovely, must have the consent of us all four—or not a penny of her portion.—For my part, I shall never approve of any but a man of figure,—and the rest are not only averse to cleanliness, but have each a peculiar taste to gratify.—For my part, I declare I would prefer you to all the men I ever saw.

*Col.* And I her to all women—

*Sir Phi.* I assure you, Mr Fainwell, I am for marrying her; for I hate the trouble of a guardian, especially among such wretches; but resolve never to agree to the choice of any one of them, —and I fancy they'll be even with me, for they never came into any proposal of mine yet.

*Col.* I wish I had your leave to try them, sir Philip.

*Sir Phi.* With all my soul, sir; I can refuse a person of your appearance nothing.

*Col.* Sir, I am infinitely obliged to you.

*Sir Phi.* But do you really like matrimony?

*Col.* I believe I could with that lady.

*Sir Phi.* The only point in which we differ—But you are master of so many qualifications, that I can excuse one fault; for I must think it a fault in a fine gentleman; and that you are such, I'll give it under my hand.

*Col.* I wish you'd give me your consent to marry Mrs Lovely under your hand, sir Philip.

*Sir Phi.* I'll do't, if you'll step into St James's Coffee-house, where we may have pen and ink—though I can't foresee what advantage my consent will be to you, without you could find a way to get the rest of the guardians. But I'll introduce you, however: she is now at a Quaker's, where I carried her this morning, when you saw us in Gracechurch-Street.—I assure you she has an odd ragout of guardians, as you will find when you hear the characters, which I'll endeavour to give you as we go along.—Hey! Pierre, Jaque, Renno—where are you all, scoundrels?——Order the chariots to St James's Coffee-house.

*Col.* Le Noir, la Brun, la Blanc.——Morbleu, ou sont ces coquins la? Allons, Monsieur le Chevalier.

*Sir Phi.* Ah! Pardonnez moi, monsieur.

*Col.* Not one step, upon my soul, sir Philip.

*Sir Phi.* The best bred man in Europe, positively! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* OBADIAH PRIM'S *house.*

*Enter* MRS LOVELY, *followed by* MRS PRIM.

*Mrs Prim.* Then, thou wilt not obey me? and thou dost really think those fallals become thee?

*Mrs Love.* I do, indeed.

*Mrs Prim.* Now will I be judged by all sober people, if I don't look more like a modest woman than thou dost, Anne.

*Mrs Love.* More like a hypocrite you mean, Mrs Prim.

*Mrs Prim.* Ah! Anne, Anne, that wicked Philip Modelove will undo thee—Satan so fills thy heart with pride, during the three months of his guardianship, that thou becomest a stumbling block to the upright.

*Mrs Love.* Pray, who are they? Are the pinched cap and formal hood the emblems of sanctity? Does your virtue consist in your dress, Mrs Prim?

*Mrs Prim.* It doth not consist in cut hair, spotted face, and a bare neck.—Oh the wickedness of the generation! The primitive women knew not the abomination of hooped petticoats.

*Mrs Love.* No; nor the abomination of cant neither. Don't tell me, Mrs Prim, don't. I know you have as much pride, vanity, self-conceit, and ambition among you, couched under that formal habit, and sanctified countenance, as the proudest of us all; but the world begins to see your prudery.

*Mrs Prim.* Prudery! What! do they invent new words as well as new fashions? Ah! poor fantastic age, I pity thee—Poor deluded Anne, which dost thou think most resembles the saint, and which the sinner, thy dress or mine? Thy naked bosom alluretb the eye of the by-stander, —encourageth the frailty of human-nature—and corrupteth the soul with evil longings.

*Mrs Love.* And, pray, who corrupted your son Tobias with evil longings? Your maid Tabitha wore a handkerchief, and yet he made the saint a sinner.

*Mrs Prim.* Well, well, spit thy malice. I confess Satan did buffet my son Tobias, and my servant Tabitha: the evil spirit was at that time too strong, and they both became subject to its workings, not from any outward provocation, but from an inward call; he was not tainted with the rottenness of the fashions, nor did his eyes take in the drunkenness of beauty.

*Mrs Love.* No! that's plainly to be seen.

*Mrs Prim.* Tabitha is one of the faithful; he fell not with a stranger.

*Mrs Love.* So! Then you hold wenching no crime, provided it be within the pale of your own tribe.——You are an excellent casuist, truly!

*Enter* OBADIAH PRIM.

*Oba. Prim.* Not stripped of thy vanity yet, Anne!—Why dost thou not make her put it off, Sarah?

*Mrs Prim.* She will not do it.

*Oba. Prim.* Verily, thy naked breast troubleth my outward man; I pray thee hide them, Anne: put on an handkerchief, Anne Lovely.

*Mrs Love.* I hate handkerchiefs when 'tis not cold weather, Mr Prim.

*Mrs Prim.* I have seen thee wear a handker-

chief, nay, and a mask to boot, in the middle of July.

*Mrs Love.* Ay; to keep the sun from scorching me.

*Oba. Prim.* If thou couldst not bear the sunbeams, how dost thou think man can bear thy beams? Those breasts inflame desire; let them be hid, I say.

*Mrs Love.* Let me be quiet, I say. Must I be tormented thus for ever? Sure no woman's condition ever equalled mine! Foppery, folly, avarice, and hypocrisy, are, by turns, my constant companions—and I must vary shapes as often as a player—I cannot think my father meant this tyranny! No, you usurp an authority which he never intended you should take.

*Oba. Prim.* Hark thee; dost thou call good counsel tyranny? Do I, or my wife, tyrannize, when we desire thee, in all love, to put off thy tempting attire, and veil thy provokers to sin?

*Mrs Love.* Deliver me, good Heaven! or I shall go distracted. [*Walks about.*

*Mrs Prim.* So! now thy pinners are tost, and thy breasts pulled up! Verily, they were seen enough before. Fy upon the filthy tailor who made thy stays!

*Mrs Love.* I wish I were in my grave! Kill me rather than treat me thus.

*Oba. Prim.* Kill thee! ha, ha! thou thinkest thou art acting some lewd play, sure!—kill thee! Art thou prepared for death, Anne Lovely? No, no; thou wouldst rather have a husband, Anne—Thou wantest a gilt coach, with six lazy fellows behind, to flaunt it in the ring of vanity, among the princes and rulers of the land, who pamper themselves with the fatness thereof; but I will take care that none shall squander away thy father's estate; thou shalt marry none such, Anne.

*Mrs Love.* Would you marry me to one of your own canting sect?

*Oba. Prim.* Yea, verily; no one else shall ever get my consent, I do assure thee, Anne.

*Mrs Love.* And, I do assure thee, Obadiah, that I will as soon turn Papist, and die in a convent.

*Mrs Prim.* Oh, wickedness!

*Mrs Love.* Oh, stupidity!

*Oba. Prim.* Oh, blindness of heart!

*Mrs Love.* Thou blinder of the world, don't provoke me—lest I betray your sanctity, and leave your wife to judge of your purity:—What were the emotions of your spirit—when you squeezed Mary by the hand last night in the pantry—when she told you, you bussed so filthily? Ah! you had no aversion to naked bosoms, when you begged her to shew you a little, little, little bit of her delicious bubby:—don't you remember those words, Mr Prim?

*Mrs Prim.* What does she say, Obadiah?

*Ob. Prim.* She talketh unintelligibly, Sarah. Which way did she hear this? This should not have reached the ears of the wicked ones:—verily, it troubleth me. [*Aside.*

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Philip Modelove, whom they call sir Philip, is below, and such another with him; shall I send them up?

*Oba. Prim.* Yea. [*Exit.*

*Enter* SIR PHILIP *and* COLONEL.

*Sir Phi.* How dost thou do, friend Prim? Odso! my she-friend here, too! What, are you documenting Miss Nancy? Reading her a lecture upon the pinched coif, I warrant ye!

*Mrs Prim.* I am sure thou didst never read her any lecture that was good. My flesh riseth so at these wicked ones, that prudence adviseth me to withdraw from their sight. [*Exit.*

*Col.* Oh! that I could find means to speak with her! How charming she appears! I wish I could get this letter into her hand. [*Aside.*

*Sir Phi.* Well, Miss Cockey, I hope thou hast got the better of them.

*Mrs Love.* The difficulties of my life are not to be surmounted, sir Philip.——I hate the impertinence of him, as much as the stupidity of the other. [*Aside.*

*Oba. Prim.* Verily, Philip, thou wilt spoil this maiden.

*Sir Phi.* I find we still differ in opinion; but that we may none of us spoil her, prithee, Prim, let us consent to marry her.—I have sent for our brother guardians to meet me here about this very thing—Madam, will you give me leave to recommend a husband to you? Here's a gentleman, whom, in my mind, you can have no objection to.

[*Presents the Colonel to her, she looks another way.*

*Mrs Love.* Heaven deliver me from the formal, and the fantastic fool!

*Col.* A fine woman——a fine horse, and fine equipage, are the finest things in the universe: and if I am so happy to possess you, madam, I shall become the envy of mankind, as much as you outshine your whole sex.

[*As he takes her hand to kiss it, he endeavours to put a letter into it; she lets it drop*—PRIM *takes it up.*

*Mrs Love.* I have no ambition to appear conspicuously ridiculous, sir. [*Turning from him.*

*Col.* So fail the hopes of Fainwell.

*Mrs Love.* Ha! Fainwell! 'Tis he! What have I done? Prim has the letter, and it will be discovered! [*Aside.*

*Oba. Prim.* Friend, I know not thy name, so cannot call thee by it; but thou seest thy letter is unwelcome to the maiden; she will not read it.

*Mrs Love.* Nor shall you; [*Snatches the letter.*] I'll tear it in a thousand pieces, and scatter

it, as I will the hopes of all those that any of you shall recommend to me. [*Tears the letter.*

*Sir Phil.* Ha! Right woman, faith!

*Col.* Excellent woman! [*Aside.*

*Oba. Prim.* Friend, thy garb savoureth too much of the vanity of the age for my approbation; nothing that resembleth Philip Modelove shall I love; mark that——therefore, friend Philip, bring no more of thy own apes under my roof.

*Sir Phi.* I am so entirely a stranger to the monsters of thy breed, that I shall bring none of them, I am sure.

*Col.* I am likely to have a pretty task by that time I have gone through them all; but she's a city worth taking; and, 'egad! I'll carry on the siege: if I can but blow up the outworks, I fancy I am pretty secure of the town. [*Aside.*

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Toby Periwinkle and Thomas Tradelove demand to see thee. [*To* SIR PHILIP.

*Sir Phi.* Bid them come up.

*Mrs Love.* Deliver me from such an inundation of noise and nonsense. Oh, Fainwell! whatever thy contrivance be, prosper it Heaven—but, oh! I fear thou never canst redeem me!

Sir Phil. *Sic transit gloria mundi.*

*Enter* MR PERIWINKLE *and* TRADELOVE.

These are my brother guardians, Mr Fainwell; prithee, observe the creatures. [*Aside to* COL.

*Trade.* Well, sir Philip, I obey your summons.

*Per.* Pray, what have you to offer for the good of Mrs Lovely, sir Philip?

*Sir. Phi.* First, I desire to know what you intend to do with that lady? Must she be sent to the Indies for a venture—or live an old maid, and then be entered amongst your curiosities, and shewn for a monster, Mr Periwinkle?

*Col.* Humph, curiosities; that must be the virtuoso. [*Aside.*

*Per.* Why, what would you do with her?

*Sir Phi.* I would recommend this gentleman to her for a husband, sir—a person, whom I have picked out from the whole race of mankind.

*Oba. Prim.* I would advise thee to shuffle him again with the rest of mankind: for I like him not.

*Col.* Pray, sir, without offence to your formality, what may be your objections?

*Oba. Prim.* Thy person; thy manners; thy dress; thy acquaintance;——thy every thing, friend.

*Sir Phi.* You are most particularly obliging, friend, ha, ha!

*Trade.* What business do you follow, pray, sir?

*Col.* Humph! by that question he must be the broker. [*Aside.*] Business, sir! the business of a gentleman.

*Trade.* That is as much as to say, you dress fine, feed high, lie with every woman you like, and pay your surgeon's bill better than your tailor's, or your butcher's.

*Col.* The court is much obliged to you, sir, for your character of a gentleman.

*Trade.* The court, sir! What would the court do without us citizens?

*Sir Phi.* Without your wives and daughters, you mean, Mr Tradelove?

*Per.* Have you ever travelled, sir?

*Col.* That question must not be answered now ——In books I have, sir.

*Per.* In books! That's fine travelling, indeed! ——Sir Philip, when you present a person I like, he shall have my consent to marry Mrs Lovely; till then, your servant. [*Exit.*

*Col.* I'll make you like me before I have done with you, or I am mistaken. [*Aside.*

*Trade.* And when you can convince me that a beau is more useful to my country than a merchant, you shall have mine; till then, you must excuse me. [*Exit.*

*Col.* So much for trade—I'll fit you, too. [*Aside.*

*Sir Phi.* In my opinion, this is very inhuman treatment, as to the lady, Mr Prim.

*Oba. Prim.* Thy opinion and mine happen to differ as much as our occupations, friend; business requireth my presence, and folly thine; and so I must bid thee farewell. [*Exit.*

*Sir Phi.* Here's breeding for you, Mr Feignwell! Gad take me,

Half my estate I'd give to see them bit.

*Col.* I hope to bite you all, if my plot hit.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.—*The Tavern.*

SACKBUT *and the Colonel, in an Egyptian dress.*

*Sack.* A lucky beginning, colonel——you have got the old beau's consent.

*Col.* Ay, he's a reasonable creature; but the other three will require some pains.—Shall I pass upon him, think you? 'Egad, in my mind, I look as antique as if I had been preserved in the ark.

*Sack.* Pass upon him! ay, ay, as roundly as white wine dash'd with sack does for mountain and sherry, if you have assurance enough——

*Col.* I have no apprehension from that quarter; assurance is the cockade of a soldier.

*Sack.* Ay, but the assurance of a soldier differs much from that of a traveller.—Can you lie with a good grace?

*Col.* As heartily, when my mistress is the prize, as I would meet the foe, when my country called, and king commanded; so don't you fear that part: if he don't know me again, I am safe —I hope he'll come.

*Sack.* I wish all my debts would come as sure. I told him you had been a great traveller, had many valuable curiosities, and was a person of a most singular taste. He seemed transported, and begged me to keep you till he came.

*Col.* Ay, ay; he need not fear my running away.—Let's have a bottle of sack, landlord; our ancestors drank sack.

*Sack.* You shall have it.

*Col.* And whereabouts is the trap-door you mentioned?

*Sack.* There's the conveyance, sir. [*Exit.*

*Col.* Now, if I should cheat all these roguish guardians, and carry off my mistress in triumph, it would be what the French call a *grand coup d'eclat*—Odso! here comes Periwinkle.———— Ah! Deuce take this beard; pray Jupiter it does not give me the slip, and spoil all!

*Enter* SACKBUT *with wine, and* PERIWINKLE *following.*

*Sack.* Sir, this gentleman, hearing you have been a great traveller, and a person of fine speculation, begs leave to take a glass with you; he is a man of a curious taste himself.

*Col.* The gentleman has it in his face and garb——Sir, you are welcome.

*Per.* Sir, I honour a traveller, and men of your inquiring disposition; the oddness of your habit pleases me exceedingly; 'tis very antique; and for that I like it.

*Col.* 'Tis very antique, sir;—this habit once belonged to the famous Claudius Ptolemeus, who lived in the year one hundred and thirty-five.

*Sack.* If he keeps up to the sample, he shall lie with the devil for a bean-stack, and win it, every straw. [*Aside.*

*Per.* A hundred and thirty-five! why, that's prodigious, now!—Well, certainly 'tis the finest thing in the world to be a traveller.

*Col.* For my part, I value none of the modern fashions a fig-leaf.

*Per.* No more don't I, sir; I had rather be the jest of a fool, than his favourite.—I am laughed at here for my singularity——This coat, you must know, sir, was formerly worn by that ingenious and very learned person, Mr John Tradescant, of Lambeth.

*Col.* John Tradescant! Let me embrace you, sir—John Tradescant was my uncle by my mother's side; and I thank you for the honour you do his memory; he was a very curious man, indeed.

*Per.* Your uncle, sir!——Nay, then, 'tis no wonder that your taste is so refined; why, you have it in your blood.——My humble service to you, sir; to the immortal memory of John Tradescant, your never-to-be-forgotten uncle! [*Drinks.*

*Col.* Give me a glass, landlord.

*Per.* I find you are primitive, even in your wine; Canary was the drink of our wise forefathers; 'tis balsamic, and saves the charge of apothecaries' cordials—Oh, that I had lived in your uncle's days! or rather, that he were now alive!—Oh, how proud he'd be of such a nephew!

*Sack.* Oh, pox! that would have spoil'd the jest. [*Aside.*

*Per.* A person of your curiosity must have collected many rarities.

*Col.* I have some, sir, which are not yet come ashore; as, an Egyptian idol.

*Per.* Pray, what may that be?

*Col.* It is, sir, a kind of ape, which they formerly worshipped in that country; I took it from the breast of a female mummy.

*Per.* Ha, ha! our women retain part of their idolatry to this day; for many an ape lies upon a lady's bosom: ha, ha!——

*Sack.* A smart old thief. [*Aside.*

*Col.* Two tusks of an hippopotamus, two pair of Chinese nut-crackers, and one Egyptian mummy.

*Per.* Pray, sir, have you never a crocodile?

*Col.* Humph!—The boatswain brought one with a design to shew it; but touching at Rotterdam, and hearing it was no rarity in England, he sold it to a Dutch poet.

*Sack.* The devil's in that nation, it rivals us in every thing!

*Per.* I should have been very glad to have seen a living crocodile.

*Col.* My genius led me to things more worthy of regard——Sir, I have seen the utmost limits

of this globular world; I have seen the sun rise and set; know in what degree of heat he is at noon, to the breadth of a hair; and what quantity of combustibles he burns in a day; and how much of it turns to ashes, and how much to cinders.

*Per.* To cinders! You amaze me, sir! I never heard that the sun consumed any thing.——Descartes tells us———

*Col.* Descartes, with the rest of his brethren, both ancient and modern, knew nothing of the matter.—I tell you, sir, that nature admits of an annual decay, though imperceptible to vulgar eyes.—Sometimes his rays destroy below, sometimes above.——You have heard of blazing comets, I suppose?

*Per.* Yes, yes; I remember to have seen one; and our astrologers tell us of another which will happen very quickly.

*Col.* Those comets are little islands bordering on the sun, which, at certain times, are set on fire by that luminous body's moving over them perpendicular, which will one day occasion a general conflagration.

*Sack.* One need not scruple the colonel's capacity, faith! [*Aside.*

*Per.* This is marvellous strange! These cinders are what I never read of in any of our learned dissertations.

*Col.* I don't know how the devil you should. [*Aside.*

*Sack.* He has it at his finger's ends; one would swear he had learned to lie at school, he does it so cleverly. [*Aside.*

*Per.* Well! you travellers see strange things! Pray, sir, have you any of those cinders?

*Col.* I have, among my other curiosities.

*Per.* Oh, what have I lost for want of travelling!—Pray, what have you else?

*Col.* Several things worth your attention.—I have a muff made of the feathers of those geese that saved the Roman Capitol.

*Per.* Is't possible!

*Sack.* Yes, if you are such a gander as to believe him. [*Aside.*

*Col.* I have an Indian leaf, which, open, will cover an acre of land, yet folds up in so little a compass, you may put it into your snuff-box.

*Sack.* Humph! That's a thunderer! [*Aside.*

*Per.* Amazing!

*Col.* Ah! mine is but a little one; I have seen some of them that would cover one of the Caribbee Islands.

*Per.* Well, if I don't travel before I die, I shan't rest in my grave——Pray, what do the Indians with them?

*Col.* Sir, they use them in their wars for tents; the old women for riding-hoods, the young for fans and umbrellas.

*Sack.* He has a fruitful invention! [*Aside.*

*Per.* I admire our East India Company imports none of them; they would certainly find their account in them.

*Col.* Right; if they could find the leaves. [*Aside.*]——Look ye, sir, do you see this little phial?

*Per.* Pray you, what is it?

*Col.* This is called Poluflosboio.

*Per.* Poluflosboio!———It has a rumbling sound.

*Col.* Right, sir; it proceeds from a rumbling nature.——This water was part of those waves which bore Cleopatra's vessel when she sailed to meet Antony.

*Per.* Well, of all that ever travelled, none had a taste like you!

*Col.* But here's the wonder of the world.—This, sir, is called Zona, or Moros Musphonon; the virtues of this are inestimable.

*Per.* Moros Musphonon! What, in the name of wisdom, can that be? To me it seems a plain belt.

*Col.* This girdle has carried me all the world over.

*Per.* You have carried it, you mean.

*Col.* I mean as I say, sir. Whenever I am girded with this, I am invisible; and, by turning this little screw, can be in the court of the Great Mogul, the Grand Signior, and king George, in as little time as your cook can poach an egg.

*Per.* You must pardon me, sir; I cannot believe it.

*Col.* If my landlord pleases, he shall try the experiment immediately.

*Sack.* I thank you kindly, sir; but I have no inclination to ride post to the devil.

*Col.* No, no, you shan't stir a foot; I'll only make you invisible.

*Sack.* But if you could not make me visible again?

*Per.* Come, try it upon me, sir; I am not afraid of the devil, nor all his tricks. 'Sbud, I'll stand them all.

*Col.* There, sir; put it on. Come; landlord, you and I must face to the east.—[*They turn about.*]—Is it on, sir!

*Per.* 'Tis on. [*They turn about again.*

*Sack.* Heaven protect me! Where is he?

*Per.* Why here, just where I was.

*Sack.* Where, where, in the name of virtue? Ah, poor Mr Periwinkle! Egad, look to't, you had best, sir; and let him be seen again, or I shall have you burnt for a wizard.

*Col.* Have patience, good landlord.

*Per.* But really don't you see me now?

*Sack.* No more than I see my grandmother, that died forty years ago.

*Per.* Are you sure you don't lie? Methinks, I stand just where I did, and see you as plain as I did before.

*Sack.* Ah! I wish I could see you once again.

*Col.* Take off the girdle, sir. [*He takes it off.*

*Sack.* Ah, sir, I am glad to see you, with all my heart. [*Embraces him.*

*Per.* This is very odd; certainly there must be some trick in't. Pray, sir, will you do me the favour to put it on yourself?

*Col.* With all my heart.

*Per.* But, first, I'll secure the door.

*Col.* You know how to turn the screw, Mr Sackbut?

*Sack.* Yes, yes. Come, Mr Periwinkle, we must turn full east.

[*They turn, the* COLONEL *sinks down the trap-door.*

*Col.* 'Tis done; now turn. [*They turn.*

*Per.* Ha! Mercy upon me! my flesh creeps upon my bones. This must be a conjurer, Mr Sackbut.

*Sack.* He is the devil, I think.

*Per.* Oh, Mr Sackbut, why do you name the devil, when, perhaps, he may be at your elbow?

*Sack.* At my elbow? marry, Heaven forbid!

*Col.* Are you satisfied?

[*From under the stage.*

*Per.* Yes, sir, yes——How hollow his voice sounds!

*Sack.* Yours seemed just the same—Faith, I wish this girdle were mine, I'd sell wine no more. Hark ye, Mr Periwinkle—[*Takes him aside till the* COLONEL *rises again.*]—if he would sell this girdle, you might travel with great expedition.

*Col.* But it is not to be parted with for money.

*Per.* I'm sorry for't, sir, because I think it the greatest curiosity I ever heard of.

*Col.* By the advice of a learned physiognomist in Grand Cairo, who consulted the lines in my face, I returned to England, where he told me I should find a rarity in the keeping of four men, which I was born to possess for the benefit of mankind; and the first of the four that gave me his consent, I should present him with this girdle—Till I have found this jewel, I shall not part with the girdle.

*Per.* What can that rarity be? Didn't he name it to you?

*Col.* Yes, sir: he called it a chaste, beautiful, unaffected woman.

*Per.* Pish! Women are no rarities——I never had any taste that way. I married, indeed, to please my father, and I got a girl to please my wife; but she and the child, (thank Heaven) died together——Women are the very gewgaws of the creation; playthings for boys, which, when they write man, they ought to throw aside.

*Sack.* A fine lecture to be read to a circle of ladies! [*Aside.*

*Per.* What woman is there, drest in all the pride and foppery of the times, can boast of such a foretop as the cockatoo?

*Col.* I must humour him—[*Aside.*]—Such a skin as the lizard?

*Per.* Such a shining breast as the humming bird?

*Col.* Such a shape as the antelope?

*Per.* Or, in all the artful mixture of their various dresses, have they half the beauty of one box of butterflies?

*Col.* No, that must be allowed—For my part, if it were not for the benefit of mankind, I'd have nothing to do with them; for they are as indifferent to me as a sparrow, or a flesh-fly.

*Per.* Pray, sir, what benefit is the world to reap from this lady?

*Col.* Why, sir, she is to bear me a son, who shall revive the art of embalming, and the old Roman manner of burying their dead; and, for the benefit of posterity, he is to discover the longitude, so long sought for in vain.

*Per.* Od! these are valuable things, Mr Sackbut!

*Sack.* He hits it off admirably, and t'other swallows it like sack and sugar—[*Aside.*]—Certainly this lady must be your ward, Mr Periwinkle, by her being under the care of four persons.

*Per.* By the description, it should——'Egad, if I could get that girdle, I'd ride with the sun, and make the tour of the world in four and twenty hours.—[*Aside.*]—And are you to give that girdle to the first of the four guardians that shall give his consent to marry that lady, say you, sir?

*Col.* I am so ordered, when I can find him.

*Per.* I fancy I know the very woman——her name is Anne Lovely.

*Col.* Excellent! he said, indeed, that the first letter of her name was L.

*Per.* Did he really? Well, that's prodigiously amazing, that a person in Grand Cairo should know any thing of my ward!

*Col.* Your ward!

*Per.* To be plain with you, sir, I am one of those four guardians.

*Col.* Are you, indeed, sir? I am transported to find the man who is to possess this Moros Musphonon is a person of so curious a taste! Here is a writing, drawn up by that famous Egyptian, which, if you will please to sign, you must turn your face full north, and the girdle is yours.

*Per.* If I live till this boy is born, I'll be embalmed, and sent to the Royal Society, when I die.

*Col.* That you shall most certainly.

*Enter a Drawer.*

*Draw.* Here's Mr Staytape the tailor inquires for you, colonel.

*Col.* Who do you speak to, you son of a whore?

*Per.* Ha! colonel! [*Aside.*

*Col.* Confound the blundering dog! [*Aside.*

*Draw.* Why, to colonel——

*Sack.* Get out, you rascal!

[*Kicks him out, and goes after him.*

*Draw.* What the devil is the matter?

*Col.* This dog has ruined all my schemes, I see by Periwinkle's looks. [*Aside.*

*Per.* How finely I should have been choused!—Colonel, you'll pardon me that I did not give you your title before——It was pure ignorance; faith it was—Pray—hem, hem! Pray, colonel, what post had this learned Egyptian in your regiment?

*Col.* A pox of your sneer!—[*Aside.*]—I don't understand you, sir.

*Per.* No, that's strange! I understand you, colonel——An Egyptian of Grand Cairo! Ha, ha, ha! I am sorry such a well-invented tale should do you no more service——We old fellows can see as far into a mill-stone as them that pick it—I am not to be tricked out of my trust—mark that.

*Col.* The devil! I must carry it off; I wish I were fairly out.—[*Aside.*]—Look ye, sir, you may make what jest you please—but the stars will be obeyed, sir; and, depend upon't, I shall have the lady, and you none of the girdle. Now for Mr Freeman's part of the plot.—[*Aside.*]

[*Exit* COLONEL.

*Per.* The stars! ha, ha! No star has favoured you, it seems——The girdle! ha, ha, ha! none of your legerdemain tricks can pass upon me—Why, what a pack of trumpery has this rogue picked up!—His Pagod, Poluflosboio, his Zonos, Moros Musphonons, and the devil knows what—But I'll take care—Ha, gone! Aye, 'twas time to sneak off. Soho! the house!

*Enter* SACKBUT.

Where is this trickster? Send for a constable; I'll have this rascal before the lord mayor; I'll Grand Cairo him, with a pox to him!——I believe you had a hand in putting this imposture upon me, Sackbut.

*Sack.* Who, I, Mr Periwinkle? I scorn it. I perceived he was a cheat, and left the room on purpose to send for a constable to apprehend him, and endeavoured to stop him when he went out—But the rogue made but one step from the stairs to the door, called a coach, leaped into it, and drove away like the devil, as Mr Freeman can witness, who is at the bar, and desires to speak with you; he is this minute come to town.

*Per.* Send him in.—[*Exit* SACKBUT.]—What a scheme this rogue has laid! How I should have been laughed at, had it succeeded!

*Enter* FREEMAN, *booted and spurred.*

Mr Freeman, your dress commands your welcome to town; what will you drink? I had like to have been imposed upon here by the veriest rascal—

*Free.* I am sorry to hear it——The dog flew for't; he had not escaped me, if I had been aware of him; Sackbut struck at him, but missed his blow, or he had done his business for him.

*Per.* I believe you never heard of such a contrivance, Mr Freeman, as this fellow had found out.

*Free.* Mr Sackbut has told me the whole story, Mr Periwinkle; but now I have something to tell you of much more importance to yourself. I happened to lie one night at Coventry, and, knowing your uncle, sir Toby Periwinkle, I paid him a visit, and, to my great surprise, found him dying.

*Per.* Dying!

*Free.* Dying, in all appearance; the servants weeping, the room in darkness: the apothecary, shaking his head, told me the doctors had given him over; and then there are small hopes, you know.

*Per.* I hope he made his will—he always told me he would make me his heir.

*Free.* I have heard you say as much, and therefore resolved to give you notice. I should think it would not be amiss if you went down to-morrow morning.

*Per.* It is a long journey, and the roads very bad.

*Free.* But he has a great estate, and the land very good——Think upon that.

*Per.* Why, that's true, as you say; I'll think upon it: in the mean time, I give you many thanks for your civility, Mr Freeman, and should be glad of your company to dine with me.

*Free.* I am obliged to be at Jonathan's coffee-house at two, and now it is half an hour after one. If I dispatch my business, I'll wait on you; I know your hour.

*Per.* You shall be very welcome, Mr Freeman; and so your humble servant.

[*Exit* PERIWINKLE.

*Re-enter* COLONEL *and* SACKBUT.

*Free.* Ha, ha, ha! I have done your business, colonel; he has swallowed the bait.

*Col.* I overheard all, though I am a little in the dark; I am to personate a highwayman, I suppose—that's a project I am not fond of; for though I may fright him out of his consent, he may fright me out of my life, when he discovers me, as he certainly must in the end.

*Free.* No, no; I have a plot for you without danger. But first, we must manage Tradelove—Has the tailor brought your clothes?

*Sack.* Yes, pox take the thief!

*Free.* Well, well, no matter; I warrant we have him yet—But now you must put on the Dutch merchant.

*Col.* The deuce of this trading plot! I wish he had been an old soldier, that I might have attacked him in my own way, heard him fight o'er all the battles of the late war—But for trade—by Jupiter, I shall never do it.

*Sack.* Never fear, colonel; Mr Freeman will instruct you.

*Free.* You'll see what others do; the coffee-house will instruct you.

*Col.* I must venture, however——But I have a farther plot in my head upon Tradelove, which you must assist me in, Freeman; you are in credit with him, I heard you say.

*Free.* I am, and will scruple nothing to serve you, colonel.

*Col.* Come along, then—Now for the Dutchman——Honest Ptolomy, by your leave.

Now must bag-wig and business come in play;
A thirty thousand pound girl leads the way.
[*Exeunt.*

## ACT IV.

SCENE I.—JONATHAN'S *coffee-house, in 'Change-alley. A crowd of people, with rolls of paper and parchment in their hands; a bar, and coffee-boys waiting.*

*Enter* TRADELOVE *and Stock-jobbers, with rolls of paper and parchment.*

1*st Stock.* SOUTH-SEA at seven-eights; who buys?

2*d Stock.* South-sea bonds due at Michaelmas, 1718. Class lottery-tickets?

3*d Stock.* East India bonds?

4*th Stock.* What, all sellers and no buyers? Gentlemen, I'll buy a thousand pound for Tuesday next, at three-fourths.

*Cof. Boy.* Fresh coffee, gentlemen; fresh coffee?

*Trade.* Hark ye, Gabriel, you'll pay the difference of that stock we transacted for t'other day?

*Gab.* Aye, Mr Tradelove, here's a note for the money upon the Sword Blade Company.
[*Gives him a note.*

*Cof. Boy.* Bohea tea, gentlemen?

*Enter a Man.*

*Man.* Is Mr Smuggler here?

1*st Cof. Boy.* Mr Smuggler's not here, sir;—you will find him at the books.

2*d Stock.* Ho! here come two sparks from t'other end of the town; what news bring they?

*Enter two Gentlemen.*

*Trade.* I would fain bite the spark in the brown coat; he comes very often into the alley, but never employs a broker.

*Enter* COLONEL *and* FREEMAN.

2*d Stock.* Who does any thing in the Civil List Lottery? or Caco? Zounds, where are all the Jews this afternoon? Are you a bull or a bear to-day, Abraham?

3*d Stock.* A bull, faith! but I have a good put for next week.

*Trade.* Mr Freeman, your servant! Who is that gentleman?

*Free.* A Dutch merchant just come to England. But hark ye, Mr Tradelove—I have a piece of news will get you as much as the French king's death did if you are expeditious. [*Shewing a letter.*] Read there; I received it just now from one that belongs to the Emperor's minister.

*Trade.* [*Reads.*] 'Sir, as I have many obliga-
'tions to you, I cannot miss any opportunity to
'shew my gratitude; this moment my lord has re-
'ceived a private express, that the Spaniards have
'raised their siege from before Cagliari. If this
'proves any advantage to you, it will answer
'both the ends and wishes of, sir, your most ob-
'bliged humble servant,
'HENRICUS DUSSELDORP.

Postscript.

'In two or three hours the news will be pub-
'lic.'

May one depend upon this, Mr Freeman?
[*Aside to* FREEMAN.

*Free.* You may. I never knew this person send me a false piece of news in my life.

*Trade.* Sir, I am much obliged to you—'Egad, 'tis rare news! Who sells South Sea for next week?

*Stock-Job.* [*Altogether.*] I sell; I, I, I, I, I sell.

1*st Stock.* I'll sell 5000l. for next week, at five eighths.

2*d Stock.* I'll sell ten thousand at five-eighths for the same time.

*Trade.* Nay, nay; hold, hold; not all together, gentlemen; I'll be no bull, I'll buy no more than I can take: will you sell ten thousand pounds at a half, for any day next week, except Saturday?

1*st Stock.* I'll sell it you, Mr Tradelove.

*Free.* [*Whispers to one of the gentlemen.*]

*Gent.* [*Aside.*] The Spaniards raised the siege of Cagliari; I don't believe one word of it.

2*d Gent.* Raised the siege! as much as you have raised the monument.

*Free.* 'Tis raised, I assure you, sir.

2*d Gent.* What will you lay on it?

*Free.* What you please.

1*st Gent.* Why, I have a brother upon the spot, in the Emperor's service; I am certain, if there were any such thing, I should have had a letter.

2*d Stock.* How's this? the siege of Cagliari raised? I wish it may be true, 'twill make business stir, and stocks rise.

1*st Stock.* Tradelove's a cunning fat bear; if this news proves true, I shall repent I sold him the five thousand pounds. Pray, sir, what assurance have you that the siege is raised?

*Free.* There is come an express to the Emperor's minister.

2*d Stock.* I'll know that presently.

*1st Gent.* Let it come where it will, I'll hold you fifty pounds 'tis false.

*Free.* 'Tis done.

*2d Gent.* I'll lay you a brace of hundreds upon the same.

*Free.* I'll take you.

*4th Stock.* 'Egad, I'll hold twenty pieces 'tis not raised, sir.

*Free.* Done with you, too.

*Trade.* I'll lay any man a brace of thousands the siege is raised.

*Free.* The Dutch merchant is your man to take in. [*Aside to* TRADELOVE.

*Trade.* Does not he know the news?

*Free.* Not a syllable; if he did, he would bet a hundred thousand pounds as soon as one penny; he's plaguy rich, and a mighty man at wagers. [*To* TRADELOVE.

*Trade.* Say you so—'Egad, I'll bite him, if possible. Are you from Holland, sir?

*Col.* Ya, mynheer.

*Trade.* Had you the news before you came away?

*Col.* What believe you, mynheer?

*Trade.* What do I believe? Why, I believe that the Spaniards have actually raised the siege of Cagliari.

*Col.* What duyvel's news is dat? 'Tis niet waer, mynheer——'tis no true, sir.

*Trade.* 'Tis so true, mynheer, that I'll lay you two thousand pounds upon it. You are sure the letter may be depended upon, Mr Freeman?

*Free.* Do you think I would venture my money, if I were not sure of the truth of it? [*Aside to* TRADELOVE.

*Col.* Two duysend pound, mynheer, 'tis gadaen—dis gentleman sal hold de gelt. [*Gives* FREEMAN *money.*

*Trade.* With all my heart—this binds the wager.

*Free.* You have certainly lost, mynheer, the siege is raised indeed.

*Col.* Ik gelov't niet, mynheer Freeman, ik sal ye dubbled honden, if you please.

*Free.* I am let into the secret; therefore, won't win your money.

*Trade.* Ha, ha, ha! I have snapt the Dutchman, faith, ha, ha! this is no ill day's work. Pray, may I crave your name, mynheer?

*Col.* Myn naem, mynheer! myn naem is Jan Van Timtamtirelereletta Heer Van Fainwell.

*Trade.* Zounds, 'tis a damned long name, I shall never remember it—Myn heer van, Tim, Tim, Tim——What the devil is it?

*Free.* Oh! never heed, I know the gentleman, and will pass my word for twice the sum.

*Trade.* That's enough.

*Col.* You'll hear of me sooner than you'll wish, old gentleman, I fancy. [*Aside.*] You'll come to Sackbut's, Freeman? [*Exit* COL.

*Free.* Immediately. [*Aside to the* COL.

*1st Man.* Humphry Hump here?

*2d Boy.* Mr Humphry Hump is not h er you'll find him upon the Dutch walk.

*Trade.* Mr Freeman, I give you many thanks for your kindness———

*Free.* I fear you'll repent, when you know all. [*Aside.*

*Trade.* Will you dine with me?

*Free.* I'm engaged at Sackbut's; adieu. [*Exit* FREE.

*Trade.* Sir, your humble servant. Now I'll see what I can do upon Change with my news. [*Exit* TRADE.

## SCENE II.—*The tavern.*

*Enter* FREEMAN *and* COLONEL.

*Free.* Ha, ha, ha! The old fellow swallowed the bait as greedily as a gudgeon.

*Col.* I have him, faith, ha, ha, ha!—His two thousand pounds secure—If he would keep his money, he must part with the lady, ha, ha!—— What came of your two friends? they performed their part very well; you should have brought them to take a glass with us.

*Free.* No matter, we'll drink a bottle together another time. I did not care to bring them hither; there's no necessity to trust them with the main secret, you know, colonel.

*Col.* Nay, that's right, Freeman.

*Enter* SACKBUT.

*Sack.* Joy, joy, colonel! the luckiest accident in the world!

*Col.* What sayest thou?

*Sack.* This letter does your business.

*Col.* [*Reads.*] 'To Obadiah Prim, hosier, near 'the building called the Monument, in London.'

*Free.* A letter to Prim! How came you by it?

*Sack.* Looking over the letters our post-woman brought, as I always do, to see what letters are directed to my house (for she can't read, you must know), I espied this directed to Prim, so paid for it among the rest; I have given the old jade a pint of wine on purpose to delay time, till you see if the letter be of any service; then I'll seal it up again, and tell I took it by mistake;—I have read it, and fancy you'll like the project. Read, read, colonel.

*Col.* [*Reads.*] 'Friend Prim, there is arrived 'from Pennsylvania one Simon Pure, a leader of 'the faithful, who hath sojourned with us eleven 'days, and hath been of great comfort to the 'brethren. He intendeth for the quarterly meeting in London; I have recommended him to thy 'house. I pray thee treat him kindly, and let 'thy wife cherish him, for he's of weakly constitution——he will depart from us the third day; 'which is all from thy friend in the faith,

AMINADAB HOLDFAST.'

Ha, ha! excellent! I understand you, landlord; I am to personate this Simon Pure, am I not?

*Sack.* Don't you like the hint?

*Col.* Admirably well!

*Free.* 'Tis the best contrivance in the world, if the right Simon gets not there before you——

*Col.* No, no; the quakers never ride post; he can't be here before to-morrow at soonest: do you send and buy me a quaker's dress, Mr Sackbut; and suppose, Freeman, you should wait at the Bristol coach, that if you see any such person, you might contrive to give me notice.

*Free.* I will—the country dress and boots, are they ready?

*Sack.* Yes, yes; every thing, sir.

*Free.* Bring them in then. [*Exit* SACK.] Thou must dispatch Periwinkle first—remember his uncle, sir Toby Periwinkle, is an old batchelor of seventy-five—that he has seven hundred a year, most in abbey-land—that he was once in love with your mother, shrewdly suspected by some to be your father—that you have been thirty years his steward—and ten years his gentleman—remember to improve these hints.

*Col.* Never fear; let me alone for that—but what's the steward's name?

*Free.* His name is Pillage.

*Col.* Enough—[*Enter* SACKBUT *with clothes.*]—Now for the country put—— [*Dresses.*

*Free.* Egad, landlord, thou deservest to have the first night's lodging with the lady for thy fidelity; what say you, colonel? shall we settle a club here? you'll make one?

*Col.* Make one! I'll bring a set of honest officers, that will spend their money as freely to the king's health, as they would their blood in his service.

*Sack.* I thank you, colonel; here, here.

[*Bell rings. Exit* SACK.

*Col.* So, now for my boots. [*Puts on boots.*] Shall I find you here, Freeman, when I come back?

*Free.* Yes——or I'll leave word with Sackbut where he may send for me—Have you the writings, the will———and every thing?

*Col.* All, all!———

*Enter* SACKBUT.

*Sack.* Zounds! Mr Freeman! yonder is Tradelove in the damnedest passion in the world—He swears you are in the house—he says you told him you were to dine here.

*Free.* I did so; ha, ha, ha! he has found himself bit already.——

*Col.* The devil! he must not see me in this dress.

*Sack.* I told him I expected you here, but you were not come yet——

*Free.* Very well—make you haste out, colonel, and let me alone to deal with him: where is he?

*Sack.* In the King's Head.

*Col.* You remember what I told you?

*Free.* Ay, ay, very well. Landlord, let him know I am come in——and now, Mr Pillage, success attend you! [*Exit* SACKBUT.

*Col.* Mr Proteus rather———

From changing shape, and imitating Jove,
I draw the happy omens of my love.
I'm not the first young brother of the blade,
Who made his fortune in a masquerade.

[*Exit* COLONEL.

*Enter* TRADELOVE.

*Free.* Zounds! Mr Tradelove, we're bit, it seems.

*Trade.* Bit, do you call it, Mr Freeman! I am ruined.——Pox on your news!

*Free.* Pox on the rascal that sent it me!——

*Trade.* Sent it you! Why Gabriel Skinflint has been at the minister's, and spoke with him, and he has assured him 'tis every syllable false; he received no such express.

*Free.* I know it: I this minute parted with my friend, who protested he never sent me any such letter——Some roguish stock-jobber has done it, on purpose to make me lose my money that's certain: I wish I knew who he was; I'd make him repent it—I have lost three hundred pounds by it.

*Trade.* What signifies your three hundred pounds, to what I have lost? There's two thousand pounds to that Dutchman with a cursed long name, besides the stock I bought: the devil! I could tear my flesh—I must never shew my face upon 'Change more;———for, by my soul, I can't pay it.

*Free.* I am heartily sorry for it! What can I serve you in? Shall I speak to the Dutch merchant, and try to get you time for the payment?

*Trade.* Time! Ads'heart, I shall never be able to look up again.

*Free.* I am very much concerned that I was the occasion, and wish I could be an instrument of retrieving your misfortune; for my own, I value it not. Adso! a thought comes into my head, that, well improved, may be of service.

*Trade.* Ah! there's no thought can be of any service to me, without paying the money, or running away.

*Free.* How do we know? What do you think of my proposing Mrs Lovely to him? He is a single man—and I heard him say, he had a mind to marry an English woman—nay, more than that, he said somebody told him you had a pretty ward—he wished you had betted her instead of your money.

*Trade.* Ay, but he'd be hanged before he'd take her instead of the money; the Dutch are too covetous for that. Besides, he did not know that there were three of us, I suppose?

*Free.* So much the better; you may venture to give him your consent, if he'll forgive you the wager: It is not your business to tell him, that your consent will signify nothing.

*Trade.* That's right, as you say; but will he do it, think you?

*Free.* I can't tell that; but I'll try what I can do with him———He has promised to meet me here an hour hence; I'll feel his pulse, and let you know: if I find it feasible, I'll send for you; if not, you are at liberty to take what measures you please.

*Trade.* You must extol her beauty, double her portion, and tell him I have the entire disposal of her, and that she can't marry without my consent; ——and that I am a covetous rogue, and will never part with her without a valuable consideration.

*Free.* Ay, ay; let me alone for a lye at a pinch.

*Trade.* 'Egad, if you can bring this to bear, Mr Freeman, I'll make you whole again; I'll pay the three hundred pounds you lost, with all my soul.

*Free.* Well, I'll use my best endeavours—— Where will you be?

*Trade.* At home; pray Heaven you prosper— If I were but the sole trustee now, I should not fear it. Who the devil would be a guardian,

If, when cash runs low, our coffers t'enlarge,
We can't, like other stocks, transfer our charge?

[*Exit* TRADELOVE.

*Free.* Ha, ha, ha!—He has it.

[*Exit* FREEMAN.

SCENE III—*Changes to* PERIWINKLE'S *house.*

*Enter* PERIWINKLE *on one side, and Footman on the other.*

*Foot.* A gentleman from Coventry inquires for you, sir.

*Per.* From my uncle, I warrant you; bring him up——This will save me the trouble, as well as the expence, of a journey.

*Enter* COLONEL.

*Col.* Is your name Periwinkle, sir?

*Per.* It is, sir.

*Col.* I am sorry for the message I bring—My old master, whom I served these forty years, claims the sorrow due from a faithful servant to an indulgent master. [*Weeps.*

*Per.* By this I understand, sir, my uncle, sir Toby Periwinkle, is dead?

*Col.* He is, sir, and he has left you heir to seven hundred a-year, in as good abbey-land as ever paid Peter-pence to Rome.——I wish you long to enjoy it; but my tears will flow when I think of my master.—[*Weeps.*] Ah! he was a good man———he has not left many of his fellows——the poor lament him sorely.

*Per.* I pray, sir, what office bore you?

*Col.* I was his steward, sir.

*Per.* I have heard him mention you with much respect; your name is———

*Col.* Pillage, sir.

*Per.* Ay, Pillage; I do remember he called you Pillage.——Pray, Mr Pillage, when did my uncle die?

*Col.* Monday last, at four in the morning. About two he signed his will, and gave it into my hands, and strictly charged me to leave Coventry the moment he expired, and deliver it to you with what speed I could: I have obeyed him, sir, and there is the will. [*Gives it to* PER.

*Per.* 'Tis very well; I'll lodge it in the Commons.

*Col.* There are two things which he forgot to insert; but charged me to tell you, that he desired you'd perform them as readily as if you had found them written in the will—which is, to remove his corpse, and bury him by his father at St Paul's, Covent-Garden, and to give all his servants mourning.

*Per.* That will be a considerable charge; a pox of all modern fashions! [*Aside.*]—Well, it shall be done. Mr Pillage, I will agree with one of death's fashion-mongers, called an undertaker, to go down, and bring up the body.

*Col.* I hope, sir, I shall have the honour to serve you in the same station I did your worthy uncle; I have not many years to stay behind him, and would gladly spend them in the family, where I was brought up—[*Weeps.*]—He was a kind and tender master to me.

*Per.* Pray, don't grieve, Mr Pillage, you shall hold your place, and every thing else which you held under my uncle.—You make me weep to see you so concerned. [*Weeps.*] He lived to a good old age, and we are all mortal.

*Col.* We are so, sir; and, therefore, I must beg you to sign this lease: you'll find sir Toby has taken particular notice of it in his will——I could not get it time enough from the lawyer, or he had signed it before he died. [*Gives him a paper.*

*Per.* A lease! for what?

*Col.* I rented a hundred a-year of sir Toby upon lease, which lease expires at Lady-day next. I desire to renew it for twenty years—that's all, sir.

*Per.* Let me see! [*Looks over the lease.*

*Col.* Matters go swimmingly, if nothing intervene! [*Aside.*

*Per.* Very well—Let's see what he says in his will about it.

[*Lays the lease upon the table, and looks on the will.*

*Col.* He's very wary; yet I fancy I shall be too cunning for him. [*Aside.*

*Per.* Ho, here it is—'The farm lying—now in possession of Samuel Pillage—suffer him to renew his lease—at the same rent'—Very well, Mr Pillage, I see my uncle does mention it, and I'll perform his will. Give me the lease—[COLONEL *gives it him; he looks upon it, and lays it upon the table.*] Pray you step to the door, and call for a pen and ink, Mr Pillage.

*Col.* I have a pen and ink in my pocket, sir. [*Pulls out an ink-horn.*] I never go without that.

*Per.* I think it belongs to your profession—[*He looks upon the pen, while the* COLONEL *changes the lease, and lays down the contract.*] I doubt this is but a sorry pen, though it may serve to write my name. [*Writes.*

*Col.* Little does he think what he signs. [*Aside.*

*Per.* There is your lease, Mr Pillage. [*Gives him the paper.*] Now I must desire you to make what haste you can down to Coventry, and take care of every thing, and I'll send down the undertaker for the body; do you attend it up, and whatever charge you are at, I'll repay you.

*Col.* You have paid me already; I thank you, sir. [*Aside.*

*Per.* Will you dine with me?

*Col.* I would rather not; there are some of my neighbours whom I met as I came along, who leave the town this afternoon, they told me, and I should be glad of their company down.

*Per.* Well, well, I won't detain you.

*Col.* I don't care how soon I am out. [*Aside.*

*Per.* I will give orders about mourning.

*Col.* You will have cause to mourn, when you know your estate imaginary only. [*Aside.*

You'll find your hopes and cares alike are vain,
In spite of all the caution you have ta'en—
Fortune rewards the faithful lover's pain.
[*Exit.*

*Per.* Seven hundred a year! I wish he had died seventeen years ago:—What a valuable collection of rarities might I have had by this time!—I might have travelled over all the known parts of the globe, and made my own closet rival the Vatican at Rome.——Odso, I have a good mind to begin my travels now;——let me see——I am but sixty! My father, grandfather, and great grandfather, reached ninety odd;—I have almost forty years good:—Let me consider! what will seven hundred a year amount to in—ay! in thirty years, I'll say but thirty—thirty times seven, is seven times thirty——that is—just twenty-one thousand pounds—'tis a great deal of money.—I may very well reserve sixteen hundred of it for a collection of such rarities as will make my name famous to posterity;——I would not die like other mortals, forgotten in a year or two, as my uncle will be—No,

With nature's curious works I'll raise my fame,
That men, till Doom's-day, may repeat my name.
[*Exit.*

## SCENE IV.—*Changes to a tavern.*

FREEMAN *and* TRADELOVE *over a bottle.*

*Trade.* Come, Mr Freeman, here's Mynheer Jan Van Tim, Tam, Tam—I shall never think of that Dutchman's name.

*Free.* Mynheer Jan Van Timtamtirelireletta Heer Van Fainwell.

*Trade.* Ay, Heer Van Fainwell, I never heard such a confounded name in my life——Here's his health, I say.

*Free.* With all my heart.

*Trade.* Faith, I never expected to have found so generous a thing in a Dutchman.

*Free.* Oh, he has nothing of the Hollander in his temper——except an antipathy to monarchy. As soon as I told him your circumstances, he replied, he would not be the ruin of any man for the world—and immediately made this proposal himself—'Let him take what time he will for 'the payment,' said he; 'or, if he'll give me his 'ward, I'll forgive him the debt.'

*Trade.* Well, Mr Freeman, I can't but thank you—'Egad you have made a man of me again! and if ever I lay a wager more, may I rot in a gaol!

*Free.* I can assure you, Mr Tradelove, I was very much concerned, because I was the occasion—though very innocently, I protest.

*Trade.* I dare swear you was, Mr Freeman.

*Enter a Fiddler.*

*Fid.* Please to have a lesson of music, or a song, gentlemen?

*Free.* Song? aye, with all our hearts; have you a very merry one?

*Fid.* Yes, sir; my wife and I can give you a merry dialogue. [*Here is the song.*

*Trade.* 'Tis very pretty, faith.

*Free.* There's something for you to drink, friend; go, lose no time.

*Fid.* I thank you, sir. [*Exit.*

*Enter Drawer and* COLONEL, *dressed for the Dutch merchant.*

*Col.* Ha, Mynheer Tradelove, Ik ben sorry voor your troubles—maer Ik sal you easie maken, Ik will de gelt nie hebben——

*Trade.* I shall for ever acknowledge the obligation, sir.

*Free.* But you understand upon what condition, Mr Tradelove; Mrs Lovely.

*Col.* Ya, de frow sal al te regt setten, Mynheer.

*Trade.* With all my heart, Mynheer; you shall have my consent to marry her freely——

*Free.* Well, then; as I am a party concerned between you, Mynheer Jan Van Timtamtirelireletta Heer Van Fainwell shall give you a discharge of your wager under his own hand, and you shall give him your consent to marry Mrs Lovely under yours——that is the way to avoid all manner of disputes hereafter.

*Col.* Ya, weeragtig.

*Trade.* Aye, aye, so it is, Mr Freeman; I'll give it under mine this minute. [*Sits down to write.*

*Col.* And so Ik sal. [*Does the same.*

*Free.* So ho, the house!

*Enter Drawer.*

Bid your master come up—I'll see there be witnesses enough to the bargain. [*Aside.*

*Enter* SACKBUT.

*Sack.* Do you call, gentlemen?

*Free.* Aye, Mr Sackbut; we shall want your hand here———

*Trade.* There, Mynheer, there's my consent, as amply as you can desire; but you must insert your own name, for I know not how to spell it; I have left a blank for it.

[*Gives the Colonel a paper.*

*Col.* Ya Ik sal dat well doen———

*Free.* Now, Mr Sackbut, you and I will witness it. [*They write.*

*Col.* Daer, Mynheer Tradelove, is your discharge. [*Gives a paper.*

*Trade.* Be pleased to witness this receipt, too, gentlemen.

[FREEMAN *and* SACKBUT *put their hands.*

*Free.* Aye, aye, that we will.

*Col.* Well, Mynheer, ye most meer doen, ye most myn voorsprach to de frow syn.

*Free.* He means you must recommend him to the lady.

*Trade.* That I will, and to the rest of my brother guardians.

*Col.* Wat, voor, de duyvel, heb you meer guardians?

*Trade.* Only three, Mynheer.

*Col.* What donder heb ye myn betrocken Mynheer? Had Ik dat gewoeten, Ik soude eaven met you geweest syn.

*Sack.* But Mr Tradelove is the principal, and he can do a great deal with the rest, sir.

*Free.* And he shall use his interest, I promise you, mynheer.

*Trade.* I will say all that ever I can think on to recommend you, mynheer; and, if you please, I'll introduce you to the lady.

*Col.* Well, dat is waer—Maer ye must first spreken of myn to de frow, and to oudere gentlemen.

*Free.* Aye, that's the best way, and then I and the Heer Van Fainwell will meet you there.

*Trade.* I will go this moment, upon honour—Your most obedient humble servant—My speaking will do you little good, Mynheer, ha, ha, ha! we have bit you, faith, ha, ha!

Well, my debt's discharged, and for the man,
He has my consent—to get her, if he can.

[*Exit.*

*Col.* Ha, ha, ha! this was a masterpiece of contrivance, Freeman.

*Free.* He hugs himself with his supposed good fortune, and little thinks the luck's on our side! but come, pursue the fickle goddess while she's in the mood—Now, for the quaker.

*Col.* That's the hardest task.
Of all the counterfeits performed by man,
A soldier makes the simplest puritan.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—PRIM's *house.*

*Enter* MRS PRIM *and* MRS LOVELY, *in quaker's dresses, meeting.*

*Mrs Prim.* So, now I like thee, Anne; art thou not better without thy monstrous hoop-coat and patches?—If Heaven should make thee so many black spots upon thy face, would it not fright thee, Anne?

*Mrs Love.* If it should turn your inside outward, and shew all the spots of your hypocrisy, 'twould fright me worse!

*Mrs Prim.* My hypocrisy! I scorn thy words, Anne; I lay no baits.

*Mrs Love.* If you did, you'd catch no fish.

*Mrs Prim.* Well, well, make thy jests—but I'd have thee to know, Anne, that I could have catched as many fish (as thou call'st them) in my time, as ever thou didst with all thy fool-traps about thee—If admirers be thy aim, thou wilt have more of them in this dress than the other—The men, take my word for't, are more desirous to see what we are most careful to conceal.

*Mrs Love.* Is that the reason of your formality, Mrs Prim? Truth will out: I ever thought, indeed, there was more design than goodness in the pinch'd cap.

*Mrs Prim.* Go, thou art corrupted with reading lewd plays, and filthy romances——good for nothing but to lead youth into the high-road of fornication. Ah! I wish thou art not already too familiar with the wicked ones!

*Mrs Love.* Too familiar with the wicked ones? Pray, no more of those freedoms, madam——I am familiar with none so wicked as yourself:—How dare you thus talk to me! you, you, you, unworthy woman you! [*Bursts into tears.*

*Enter* TRADELOVE.

*Trade.* What, in tears, Nancy? What have you done to her, Mrs Prim, to make her weep?

*Mrs Love.* Done to me! I admire I keep my senses among you; but I will rid myself of your tyranny, if there be either law or justice to be had——I'll force you to give me up my liberty.

*Mrs Prim.* Thou hast more need to weep for thy sins, Anne——Yea, for thy manifold sins.

*Mrs Love.* Don't think that I'll be still the fool which you have made me. No, I'll wear what I please——go when and where I please——and

keep what company I think fit, and not what you shall direct——I will.

*Trade.* For my part, I do think all this very reasonable, Mrs Lovely——'Tis fit you should have your liberty, and for that very purpose I am come.

*Enter* MR PERIWINKLE *and* OBADIAH PRIM, *with a letter in his hand.*

*Per.* I have bought some black stockings of your husband, Mrs Prim; but he tells me the glover's trade belongs to you; therefore, I pray you, look me out five or six dozen of mourning gloves, such as are given at funerals, and send them to my house.

*Oba. Prim.* My friend Periwinkle has got a good wind-fall to-day—seven hundred a-year.

*Mrs Prim.* I wish thee joy of it, neighbour.

*Trade.* What, is sir Toby dead, then?

*Per.* He is! You'll take care, Mrs Prim?

*Mrs Prim.* Yea, I will, neighbour.

*Oba. Prim.* This letter recommendeth a speaker; 'tis from Aminadab Holdfast, of Bristol; peradventure, he will be here this night; therefore, Sarah, do thou take care for his reception—[*Gives her the letter.*

*Mrs Prim.* I will obey thee.

[*Exit* MRS PRIM.

*Oba. Prim.* What art thou in the dumps for, Anne?

*Trade.* We must marry her, Mr Prim.

*Oba. Prim.* Why, truly, if we could find a husband worth having, I should be as glad to see her married as thou wouldst, neighbour.

*Per.* Well said; there are but few worth having.

*Trade.* I can recommend you a man, now, that I think you can none of you have an objection to.

*Enter* SIR PHILIP MODELOVE.

*Per.* You recommend! Nay, whenever she marries, I'll recommend the husband——

*Sir Phi.* What must it be, a whale or a rhinoceros, Mr Periwinkle? Ha, ha, ha! Mr Tradelove, I have a bill upon you—[*Gives him a paper*]—and have been seeking for you all over the town.

*Trade.* I'll accept it, sir Philip, and pay it when due.

*Per.* He shall be none of the fops at your end of the town, with full perukes and empty skulls—nor yet any of your trading gentry, who puzzle the heralds to find arms for their coaches. No; he shall be a man famous for travels, solidity, and curiosity; one who has searched into the profundity of nature! When Heaven shall direct such a one, he shall have my consent, because it may turn to the benefit of mankind.

*Mrs Love.* The benefit of mankind! What, would you anatomize me?

*Sir Phi.* Aye, aye, madam; he would dissect you.

*Trade.* Or, pore over you through a microscope, to see how your blood circulates from the crown of your head to the sole of your foot——Ha, ha! but I have a husband for you, a man that knows how to improve your fortune; one that trades to the four corners of the globe.

*Mrs Love.* And would send me for a venture, perhaps.

*Trade.* One that will dress you in all the pride of Europe, Asia, Africa, and America—a Dutch merchant, my girl.

*Sir Phi.* A Dutchman! Ha, ha; there's a husband for a fine lady. Ya frow, will you meet myn slapen—Ha, ha! he'll learn you to talk the language of the hogs, madam, ha, ha!

*Trade.* He'll learn you, that one merchant is of more service to a nation than fifty coxcombs.—The Dutch know the trading interest to be of more benefit to the state, than the landed.

*Sir Phi.* But what is either interest to a lady?

*Trade.* 'Tis the merchant makes the belle——How would the ladies sparkle in the box without the merchant? The Indian diamond! The French brocade! The Italian fan! The Flanders lace! The fine Dutch holland! How would they vent their scandal over their tea-tables? And where would your beaux have Champagne to toast their mistresses, were it not for the merchant?

*Oba. Prim.* Verily, neighbour Tradelove, thou dost waste thy breath about nothing---All that thou hast said, tendeth only to debauch youth, and fill their heads with the pride and luxury of this world—The merchant is a very great friend to satan, and sendeth as many to his dominions as the pope.

*Per.* Right; I say knowledge makes the man.

*Oba. Prim.* Yea, but not thy kind of knowledge——It is the knowledge of truth. Search thou for the light within, and not for baubles, friend.

*Mrs Love.* Ah, study your country's good, Mr Periwinkle, and not her insects. Rid you of your home-bred monsters, before you fetch any from abroad——I dare swear, you have maggots enough in your own brain, to stock all the virtuosos in Europe with butterflies.

*Sir Phi.* By my soul, miss Nancy's a wit!

*Oba. Prim.* That is more than she can say by thee, friend—Look ye, it is in vain to talk; when I meet a man worthy of her, she shall have my leave to marry him.

*Mrs Love.* Provided he be of the faithful——Was there ever such a swarm of caterpillars to blast the hopes of a woman!—[*Aside.*]—Know this, that you contend in vain: I'll have no husband of your choosing, nor shall you lord it over me long—I'll try the power of an English senate—Orphans have been redressed, and wills set aside----And none did ever deserve their pity

more---Oh, Fainwell! Where are thy promises to free me from these vermin? Alas! the task was more difficult than he imagined!

A harder task than what the poets tell
Of yore, the fair Andromeda befel;
She but one monster feared, I've four to fear,
And see no Perseus, no deliverer near.
[*Exit* MRS LOVELY.

*Enter Servant, and whispers to* PRIM.

*Ser.* One Simon Pure inquireth for thee.

*Per.* The woman is mad. [*Exit.*

*Sir Phil.* So you are all, in my opinion. [*Exit.*

*Oba. Prim.* Friend Tradelove, business requireth my presence.

*Trade.* Oh, I shan't trouble you---Pox take him for an unmannerly dog!---However, I have kept my word with my Dutchman, and will introduce him too, for all you. [*Exit.*

*Enter* COLONEL, *in a quaker's habit.*

*Oba. Prim.* Friend Pure, thou art welcome; how is it with friend Holdfast, and all friends in Bristol? Timothy Littleworth, John Slenderbrain, and Christopher Keepfaith?

*Col.* A goodly company!---[*Aside.*]---They are all in health, I thank thee for them.

*Oba. Prim.* Friend Holdfast writes me word, that thou camest lately from Pennsylvania. How do all friends there?

*Col.* What the devil shall I say? I know just as much of Pennsylvania, as I do of Bristol. [*Aside.*

*Oba. Prim.* Do they thrive?

*Col.* Yea, friend; the blessing of their good works falls upon them.

*Enter* MRS PRIM *and* MRS LOVELY.

*Oba. Prim.* Sarah, know our friend Pure.

*Mrs Prim.* Thou art welcome. [*He salutes her.*

*Col.* Here comes the sum of all my wishes---How charming she appears, even in that disguise! [*Aside.*

*Oba. Prim.* Why dost thou consider the maiden so attentively, friend?

*Col.* I will tell thee: about four days ago I saw a vision---This very maiden, but in vain attire, standing on a precipice; and heard a voice, which called me by my name---and bid me put forth my hand and save her from the pit---I did so; and, methought, the damsel grew unto my side.

*Mrs Prim.* What can that portend?

*Oba. Prim.* The damsel's conversion——I am persuaded.

*Mrs Love.* That's false, I'm sure—— [*Aside.*

*Oba. Prim.* Wilt thou use the means, friend Pure?

*Col.* Means! What means? Is she not thy daughter, already one of the faithful?

*Mrs Prim.* No, alas! she's one of the ungodly.

*Oba. Prim.* Pray thee, mind what this good man will say unto thee; he will teach thee the way that thou shouldest walk, Anne.

*Mrs Love.* I know my way without his instruction: I hoped to have been quiet when once I had put on your odious formality here.

*Col.* Then thou wearest it out of compulsion, not choice, friend?

*Mrs Love.* Thou art in the right of it, friend.

*Mrs Prim.* Art thou not ashamed to mimic the good man? Ah, thou art a stubborn girl!

*Col.* Mind her not; she hurteth not me——If thou wilt leave her alone with me, I will discuss some few points with her, that may, perchance, soften her stubbornness, and melt her into compliance.

*Oba. Prim.* Content: I pray thee, put it home to her. Come, Sarah, let us leave the good man with her.

*Mrs Love.* [*Catching hold of* PRIM; *he breaks loose, and exit.*] What do you mean—to leave me with this old enthusiastical canter? Don't think, because I complied with your formality, to impose your ridiculous doctrine upon me.

*Col.* I pray thee, young woman, moderate thy passion.

*Mrs Love.* I pray thee, walk after thy leader; you will but lose your labour upon me.—These wretches will certainly make me mad!

*Col.* I am of another opinion; the spirit telleth me I shall convert thee, Anne.

*Mrs Love.* 'Tis a lying spirit; don't believe it.

*Col.* Say'st thou so? Why, then, thou shalt convert me, my angel. [*Catching her in his arms.*

*Mrs Love.* [*Shrieks.*] Ah! monster, hold off, or I'll tear thy eyes out.

*Col.* Hush! for Heaven's sake—dost thou not know me? I am Fainwell.

*Mrs Love.* Fainwell! [*Enter old* PRIM.] Oh, I'm undone! Prim here——I wish, with all my soul, I had been dumb!

*Oba. Prim.* What is the matter? Why did'st thou shriek out, Anne?

*Mrs Love.* Shriek out! I'll shriek, and shriek again; cry murder, thieves, or any thing, to drown the noise of that eternal babbler, if you leave me with him any longer.

*Oba. Prim.* Was that all? Fy, fy, Anne!

*Col.* No matter; I'll bring down her stomach, I'll warrant thee——Leave us, I pray thee.

*Oba. Prim.* Fare thee well. [*Exit.*

*Col.* My charming, lovely woman! [*Embraces her.*

*Mrs Love.* What meanest thou by this disguise, Fainwell?

*Col.* To set thee free, if thou wilt perform thy promise.

*Mrs Love.* Make me mistress of my fortune, and make thy own conditions.

*Col.* This night shall answer all my wishes.—

See here, I have the consent of three of thy guardians already, and doubt not but Prim will make the fourth. [PRIM *listening.*

*Oba. Prim.* I would gladly hear what arguments the good man useth to bend her. [*Aside.*

*Mrs Love.* Thy words give me new life, methinks.

*Oba. Prim.* What do I hear?

*Mrs Love.* Thou best of men! Heaven meant to bless me, sure, when I first saw thee.

*Oba. Prim.* He hath mollified her.——Oh, wonderful conversion!

*Col.* Ha! Prim listening.—No more, my love; we are observed; seem to be edified, and give them hopes that thou wilt turn quaker, and leave the rest to me. [*Aloud.*] I am glad to find that thou art touched with what I said unto thee, Anne; another time I will explain the other article unto thee; in the mean while, be thou dutiful to our friend Prim.

*Mrs Love.* I shall obey thee in every thing.

*Enter* OBADIAH PRIM.

*Oba. Prim.* Oh, what a prodigious change is here!—Thou hast wrought a miracle, friend! Anne, how dost thou like the doctrine he hath preached?

*Mrs Love.* So well, that I could talk to him for ever, methinks—I am ashamed of my former folly, and ask your pardon, Mr Prim.

*Col.* Enough, enough, that thou art sorry; he is no pope, Anne.

*Oba. Prim.* Verily, thou dost rejoice me exceedingly, friend; will it please thee to walk into the next room, and refresh thyself——Come, take the maiden by the hand.

*Col.* We will follow thee.

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* There is another Simon Pure inquireth for thee, master.

*Col.* The devil there is! [*Aside.*

*Oba. Prim.* Another Simon Pure! I do not know him. Is he any relation of thine?

*Col.* No, friend; I know him not——Pox take him! I wish he were in Pennsylvania again, with all my soul. [*Aside.*

*Mrs Love.* What shall I do? [*Aside.*

*Oba. Prim.* Bring him up.

*Col.* Humph! then one of us must go down; that's certain.—Now, impudence assist me!

*Enter* SIMON PURE.

*Oba. Prim.* What is thy will with me, friend?

*Sim. Pure.* Didst thou not receive a letter from Aminadab Holdfast, of Bristol, concerning one Simon Pure?

*Oba. Prim.* Yea; and Simon Pure is already here, friend.

*Col.* And Simon Pure will stay here, friend, if it be possible. [*Aside.*

*Sim. Pure.* That's an untruth; for I am he.

*Col.* Take thou heed, friend, what thou dost say; I do affirm that I am Simon Pure.

*Sim. Pure.* Thy name may be Pure, friend, but not that Pure.

*Col.* Yea, that Pure, which my good friend, Aminadab Holdfast, wrote to my friend Prim about; the same Simon Pure that came from Pennsylvania, and sojourned in Bristol eleven days——thou wouldst not take my name from me, wouldst thou?——till I have done with it. [*Aside.*

*Sim. Pure.* Thy name! I'm astonished!

*Col.* At what? at thy own assurance?

[*Going up to him,* SIMON PURE *starts back.*

*Sim. Pure.* Avaunt, Satan! approach me not; I defy thee and all thy works.

*Mrs Love.* Oh, he'll outcant him—Undone, undone for ever. [*Aside.*

*Col.* Hark thee, friend, thy sham will not take ——Don't exert thy voice; thou art too well acquainted with Satan to start at him, thou wicked reprobate—What can thy design be here?

*Enter a Servant, and gives* PRIM *a letter.*

*Oba. Prim.* One of these must be a counterfeit; but which, I cannot say.

*Col.* What can that letter be? [*Aside.*

*Sim. Pure.* Thou must be the devil, friend, that's certain; for no human power can stock so great a falsehood.

*Oba. Prim.* This letter sayeth that thou art better acquainted with that prince of darkness than any here.—Read that, I pray thee, Simon.

[*Gives it to the* COLONEL.

*Col.* 'Tis Freeman's hand—[*Reads.*] 'There 'is a design formed to rob your house this night, 'and cut your throat; and for that purpose there 'is a man disguised like a quaker, who is to 'pass for one Simon Pure; the gang, whereof I 'am one, though now resolved to rob no more, 'has been at Bristol; one of them came in the 'coach with the quaker, whose name he hath 'taken; and, from what he hath gathered from 'him, formed that design; and did not doubt but 'he should so far impose upon you, as to make 'you turn out the real Simon Pure, and keep 'him with you. Make the right use of this. 'Adieu.' Excellent well! [*Aside.*

*Oba. Prim.* Dost thou hear this?

[*To* SIMON PURE.

*Sim. Pure.* Yea, but it moveth me not; that, doubtless, is the impostor.

[*Pointing at the* COLONEL.

*Col.* Ah! thou wicked one—now I consider thy face, I remember thou didst come up in the leathern conveniency with me—thou hadst a black bob wig on, and a brown camblet coat with brass buttons.——Can'st thou deny it, ha?

*Sim. Pure.* Yea, I can; and with a safe conscience, too, friend.

*Oba. Prim.* Verily, friend, thou art the most impudent villain I ever saw.

*Mrs Love.* Nay, then, I'll have a fling at him. [*Aside.*]—I remember the face of this fellow at Bath—Ay, this is he that picked my lady Raffle's pocket in the Grove——Don't you remember that the mob pumped you, friend?——This is the most notorious rogue———

*Sim. Pure.* What does provoke thee to seek my life?—Thou wilt not hang me, wilt thou, wrongfully?

*Oba. Prim.* She will do thee no hurt, nor thou shalt do me none; therefore, get thee about thy business, friend, and leave thy wicked course of life, or thou mayest not come off so favourably every where.

*Col.* Go, friend, I would advise thee; and tempt thy fate no more.

*Sim. Pure.* Yea, I will go; but it shall be to thy confusion; for I shall clear myself; I will return with some proofs, that shall convince thee, Obadiah, that thou art highly imposed upon. [*Exit.*

*Col.* Then there will be no stay for me, that's certain—What the devil shall I do? [*Aside.*

*Oba. Prim.* What monstrous works of iniquity are there in this world, Simon!

*Col.* Yea, the age is full of vice—'Sdeath, I am so confounded, I know not what to say. [*Aside.*

*Oba. Prim.* Thou art disordered, friend——art thou not well?

*Col.* My spirit is greatly troubled; and something telleth me, that though I have wrought a good work in converting this maiden, this tender maiden, yet my labour will be in vain: for the evil spirit fighteth against her; and I see, yea I see with the eye of my inward man, that Satan will re-buffet her again, whenever I withdraw myself from her; and she will, yea, this very damsel will, return again to that abomination from whence I have retrieved her, as if it were, yea, as if it were out of the jaws of the fiend.

*Oba. Prim.* Good lack! thinkest thou so?

*Mrs Love.* I must second him. [*Aside.*] What meaneth this struggling within me? I feel the spirit resisteth the vanities of this world, but the flesh is rebellious, yea, the flesh—I greatly fear the flesh, and the weakness thereof—hum—

*Oba. Prim.* The maid is inspired. [*Aside.*

*Col.* Behold, her light begins to shine forth.—Excellent woman!

*Mrs Love.* This good man hath spoken comfort unto me, yea comfort, I say; because the words which he hath breathed into my outward ears, are gone through and fixed in mine heart; yea, verily, in mine heart, I say; and I feel the spirit doth love him exceedingly---hum——

*Col.* She acts it to the life! [*Aside.*

*Oba. Prim.* Prodigious! The damsel is filled with the spirit—Sarah.

*Enter* MRS PRIM.

*Mrs Prim.* I am greatly rejoiced to see such a change in our beloved Anne. I came to tell thee that supper stayeth for thee.

*Col.* I am not disposed for thy food; my spirit longeth for more delicious meat!—Fain would I redeem this maiden from the tribe of sinners, and break those cords asunder wherewith she is bound——hum———

*Mrs Love.* Something whispers in my ears, methinks—that I must be subject to the will of this good man, and from him only must hope for consolation.——hum.—It also telleth me, that I am a chosen vessel to raise up seed to the faithful; and that thou must consent, that we two be one flesh, according to the word—hum—

*Oba. Prim.* What a revelation is here! This is certainly part of thy vision, friend; this is the maiden's *growing into thy side.* Ah! with what willingness should I give thee my consent, could I give thee her fortune, too!——but thou wilt never get the consent of the wicked ones.

*Col.* I wish I was sure of yours. [*Aside.*

*Oba. Prim.* My soul rejoiceth; yea, rejoiceth, I say, to find the spirit within thee; for lo, it moveth thee with natural agitation—yea, with natural agitation, towards this good man—yea, it stirreth, as one may say—yea, verily I say it *stirreth* up thy inclination---yea, as one would stir a pudding.

*Mrs Love.* I see, I see the spirit guiding of thy hand, good Obadiah Prim! and now behold thou art signing thy consent;——and now I see myself within thy arms, my friend and brother, yea, I am become bone of thy bone, and flesh of thy flesh. [*Embracing him.*]---hum———

*Col.* Admirably performed! [*Aside.*]---And I will take thee in all spiritual love for an helpmate, yea, for the wife of my bosom———and now, methinks———I feel a longing———yea, a longing, I say, for the consummation of thy love,———yea, I do long exceedingly.

*Mrs Love.* And verily, verily, my spirit feeleth the same longing.

*Mrs Prim.* The spirit hath greatly moved them both---friend Prim, thou must consent; there's no resisting of the spirit!

*Oba. Prim.* Yea, the light within sheweth me that I shall fight a good fight---and wrestle through those reprobate fiends, thy other guardians;———yea, I perceive the spirit will hedge thee into the flock of the righteous.—Thou art a chosen lamb—yea, a chosen lamb, and I will not push thee back—No, I will not, I say;---no, thou shalt leap-a, and frisk-a, and skip-a, and bound, and bound, I say,—yea, bound within the fold of the righteous———yea, even within thy fold, my brother.—Fetch me the pen and ink, Sarah—and my hand shall confess its obedience to the spirit.

*Col.* I wish it were over. [*Aside.*

*Enter* MRS PRIM, *with pen and ink.*

*Mrs Love.* I tremble lest this quaking rogue should return and spoil all. [*Aside.*

*Oba. Prim.* Here, friend, do thou write what the spirit prompteth, and I will sign it.

[COLONEL *sits down.*

*Mrs Prim.* Verily, Anne, it greatly rejoiceth me, to see thee reformed from that original wickedness wherein I found thee.

*Mrs Love.* I do believe thou art, and I thank thee———

*Col.* [Reads.] 'This is to certify all whom it 'may concern, that I do freely give all my right 'and title in Anne Lovely to Simon Pure, and 'my full consent that she shall become his wife, 'according to the form of marriage. Witness 'my hand.'

*Oba Prim.* That's enough; give me the pen.

[*Signs it.*

*Enter* BETTY, *running to* MRS LOVELY.

*Betty.* Oh! madam, madam, here's the quaking man again; he has brought a coachman, and two or three more.

*Mrs Love.* Ruined past redemption!

[*Aside to* COLONEL.

*Col.* No, no; one minute sooner had spoiled all; but now———here's company coming; friend, give me the paper.

[*Going up to* PRIM *hastily.*

*Oba. Prim.* Here it is, Simon; and I wish thee happy with the maiden.

*Mrs Love.* 'Tis done; and now, devil, do thy worst!

*Enter* SIMON PURE, *and Coachman, &c.*

*S. Pure.* Look thee, friend, I have brought these people, to satisfy thee that I am not that impostor which thou didst take me for; this is the man that did drive the leathern conveniency, and brought me from Bristol; and this is———

*Col.* Look ye, friend, to save the court the trouble of examining witnesses, I plead guilty.—Ha, ha!

*Oba. Prim.* How's this? Is not thy name Pure, then?

*Col.* No, really, sir; I only make bold with this gentleman's name—but I here give it up, safe and sound; it has done the business which I had occasion for, and now I intend to wear my own, which shall be at his service upon the same occasion at any time. Ha, ha, ha!

*S. Pure.* Oh! the wickedness of the age!

*Coachman.* Then you have no further need of us. [*Exit.*

*Col.* No; honest man, you may go about your business.

*Oba. Prim.* I am struck dumb with thy impudence. Anne, thou hast deceived me—and, perchance, undone thyself.

*Mrs Prim.* Thou art a dissembling baggage, and shame will overtake thee. [*Exit.*

*S. Pure.* I am grieved to see thy wife so much troubled: I will follow and console her. [*Exit.*

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Thy brother guardians inquire for thee; here is another man with them.

*Mrs Love.* Who can that other man be?

[*To the* COLONEL.

*Col.* 'Tis one Freeman, a friend of mine, whom I ordered to bring the rest of the guardians here.

*Enter* SIR PHILIP, TRADELOVE, PERIWINKLE, *and* FREEMAN.

*Free.* [*To the* COLONEL.] Is all safe? did my letter do you service?

*Col.* All, all's safe! ample service. [*Aside.*

*Sir Phi.* Miss Nancy, how dost do, child?

*Mrs Love.* Don't call me miss, friend Philip; my name is Anne, thou knowest.——

*Sir Phi.* What! is the girl metamorphosed?

*Mrs Love.* I wish thou wert so metamorphosed.—Ah! Philip, throw off that gaudy attire, and wear the clothes becoming thy age.

*Oba. Prim.* I am ashamed to see these men.

[*Aside.*

*Sir Phi.* My age! the woman is possessed.

*Col.* No, thou art possessed rather, friend.

*Trade.* Hark ye, Mrs Lovely, one word with you. [*Takes hold of her hand.*

*Col.* This maiden is my wife, thanks to friend Prim, and thou hast no business with her.

[*Takes her from him.*

*Trade.* His wife! hark ye, Mr Freeman.

*Per.* Why, you have made a very fine piece of work of it, Mr Prim.

*Sir Phi.* Married to a quaker! thou art a fine fellow to be left guardian to an orphan, truly! there's a husband for a young lady!

*Col.* When I have put on my beau clothes, sir Philip, you'll like me better——

*Sir Phi.* Thou wilt make a very scurvy beau—friend———

*Col.* I believe I can prove it under your hand, that you thought me a very fine gentleman in the Park t'other day, about thirty-six minutes after eleven; will you take a pinch, sir Philip? One of the finest snuff-boxes you ever saw.

[*Offers him snuff.*

*Sir Phi.* Ha, ha, ha! I am overjoyed, faith, I am, if thou be'st the gentleman—I own I did give my consent to the gentleman I brought here today—but whether this is he, I can't be positive.

*Oba. Prim.* Can'st thou not?—Now, I think thou art a fine fellow to be left guardian to an orphan! Thou shallow-brained shuttlecock! he may be a pick-pocket for aught thou dost know.

*Per.* You would have been two rare fellows to have been trusted with the sole management of her fortune—would ye not, think ye? But Mr Tradelove and myself shall take care of her portion.———

*Trade.* Ay, ay; so we will.—Did not you tell me the Dutch merchant desired me to meet him here, Mr Freeman?

*Free.* I did so, and I am sure he will be here, if you'll have a little patience.

*Col.* What! is Mr Tradelove impatient? Nay, then, ik ben gereet voor you, heb be, Jan Van Timtamtirelireletta Heer Van Fainwell, vergeeten!

*Trade.* Oh! pox of the name! what! have you tricked me, too, Mr Freeman?

*Col.* Tricked, Mr Tradelove! did not I give you two thousand pounds for your consent fairly? And, now, do you tell a gentleman he has tricked you?

*Per.* So, so, you are a pretty guardian, faith, to sell your charge! what! did you look upon her as part of your stock?

*Oba. Prim.* Ha, ha, ha! I am glad thy knavery is found out, however——I confess the maiden over-reached me, and I had no sinister end at all.

*Per.* Ay, ay, one thing or other over-reached you all—but I'll take care he shall never finger a penny of her money, I warrant you—Over-reached, quoth'a! Why, I might have been over-reached, too, if I had had no more wit: I don't know but this very fellow may be him that was directed to me from Grand Cairo t'other day. Ha, ha, ha!

*Col.* The very same.

*Per.* Are you so, sir? but your trick would not pass upon me.

*Col.* No, as you say, at that time it did not; that was not my lucky hour——but, hark ye, sir, I must let you into one secret—you may keep honest John Tradescant's coat on, for your uncle sir Toby Periwinkle is not dead—so the charge of mourning will be saved—ha, ha, ha! Don't you remember Mr Pillage, your uncle's steward? Ha, ha, ha!

*Per.* Not dead! I begin to fear I am tricked, too.

*Col.* Don't you remember the signing of a lease, Mr Periwinkle?

*Per.* Well; and what signifies that lease, if my uncle is not dead?—Ha! I am sure it was a lease I signed——

*Col.* Ay; but it was a lease for life, sir, and of this beautiful tenement, I thank you.

[*Taking hold of* MRS LOVELY.

*Omnes.* Ha, ha, ha! Neighbour's fare.

*Free.* So, then, I find you are all tricked—ha, ha!

*Per.* I am certain I read as plain a lease as ever I read in my life.

*Col.* You read a lease, I grant you; but you signed this contract. [*Shewing a paper.*

*Per.* How durst you put this trick upon me, Mr Freeman? Did not you tell me my uncle was dying?

*Free.* And would tell you twice as much to serve my friend—ha, ha!

*Sir Phi.* What! the learned and famous Mr Periwinkle choused, too!——Ha, ha, ha!—I shall die with laughing—ha, ha, ha!

*Oba. Prim.* It had been well if her father had left her to wiser heads than thine and mine, friends—ha, ha, ha!

*Trade.* Well, since you have outwitted us all, pray you, what and who are you, sir?

*Sir Phi.* Sir, the gentleman is a fine gentleman.——I am glad you have got a person, madam, who understands dress and good-breeding. I was resolved she should have a husband of my choosing.

*Oba. Prim.* I am sorry the maiden has fallen into such hands.

*Trade.* A beau! nay, then, she is finely helped up.

*Mrs Love.* Why, beaux are great encouragers of trade, sir. Ha, ha, ha!

*Col.* Look ye, gentlemen; I am the person who can give the best account of myself; and I must beg sir Philip's pardon, when I tell him, that I have as much aversion to what he calls dress and breeding, as I have to the enemies of my religion. I have had the honour to serve his majesty, and headed a regiment of the bravest fellows that ever pushed bayonet in the throat of a Frenchman; and, notwithstanding the fortune this lady brings me, whenever my country wants my aid, this sword and arm are at her service.

Therefore, my dear, if thou'lt but deign to smile,
I meet a recompense for all my toil.
Love and religion ne'er admit restraint,
And force makes many sinners, not one saint;
Still free as air the active mind does rove,
And searches proper objects for its love;
But that once fixed, 'tis past the power of art
To chase the dear idea from the heart:
'Tis liberty of choice that sweetens life,
Makes the glad husband, and the happy wife.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

# THE

# CONSCIOUS LOVERS.

BY

*STEELE.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### MEN.

Sir John Bevil.
Mr Sealand.
Bevil, junior, *in love with* Indiana.
Myrtle, *in love with* Lucinda.
Cimberton, *a coxcomb.*
Humphrey, *an old servant to* Sir John Bevil.
Tom, *servant to* Bevil, junior.
Daniel, *a country boy, servant to* Indiana.

### WOMEN.

Mrs Sealand, *second wife to* Sealand.
Isabella, *sister to* Sealand.
Indiana, Sealand's *daughter, by his first wife.*
Lucinda, Sealand's *daughter, by his second wife.*
Phillis, *maid to* Lucinda.

*Scene—London.*

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—Sir John Bevil's *house.*

*Enter* Sir John Bevil *and* Humphrey.

*Sir J. Bev.* Have you ordered that I should not be interrupted while I am dressing?

*Humph.* Yes, sir; I believed you had something of moment to say to me.

*Sir J. Bev.* Let me see, Humphrey; I think it is now full forty years, since I first took thee to be about myself.

*Humph.* I think, sir, it has been an easy forty years; and I have passed them without much sickness, care, or labour.

*Sir J. Bev.* Thou hast a brave constitution: you are a year or two older than I am, sirrah.

*Humph.* You have ever been of that mind, sir

*Sir J. Bev.* You knave, you know it; I took thee for thy gravity and sobriety in my wild years.

*Humph.* Ah, sir! our manners were formed from our different fortunes, not our different ages; wealth gave a loose to your youth, and poverty put a restraint upon mine.

*Sir J. Bev.* Well, Humphrey, you know I have been a kind master to you; I have used you, for the ingenuous nature I observed in you from the beginning, more like an humble friend than a servant.

*Humph.* I humbly beg you'll be so tender of me, as to explain your commands, sir, without any farther preparation.

*Sir J. Bev.* I'll tell thee, then. In the first place, this wedding of my son's, in all probability (shut the door) will never be at all.

*Humph.* How, sir, not be at all! for what reason is it carried on in appearance?

*Sir J. Bev.* Honest Humphrey, have patience, and I'll tell thee all in order. I have myself, in some part of my life, lived, indeed, with freedom, but I hope without reproach. Now, I thought liberty would be as little injurious to my son: therefore, as soon as he grew towards man, I indulged him in living after his own manner. I know not how otherwise to judge of his inclination; for what can be concluded from a behaviour under restraint and fear? But what charms me above all expression, is, that my son has never, in the least action, the most distant hint or word, valued himself upon that great estate of his mother's, which, according to our marriage-settlement, he has had ever since he came to age.

*Humph.* No, sir; on the contrary, he seems afraid of appearing to enjoy it before you or any belonging to you. He is as dependent and resigned to your will, as if he had not a farthing but what must come from your immediate bounty. You have ever acted like a good and generous father, and he like an obedient and grateful son.

*Sir J. Bev.* Nay, his carriage is so easy to all with whom he converses, that he is never assuming, never prefers himself to others, nor is ever guilty of that rough sincerity which a man is not called to, and certainly disobliges most of his acquaintance. To be short, Humphrey, his reputation was so fair in the world, that old Sealand, the great India merchant, has offered his only daughter, and sole heiress to that vast estate of his, as a wife for him. You may be sure I made no difficulties; the match was agreed on, and this very day named for the wedding.

*Humph.* What hinders the proceeding?

*Sir J. Bev.* Don't interrupt me. You know I was, last Thursday, at the masquerade; my son, you may remember, soon found us out——he knew his grandfather's habit, which I then wore; and though it was in the mode in the last age, yet the maskers, you know, followed us, as if we had been the most monstrous figures in that whole assembly.

*Humph.* I remember, indeed, a young man of quality, in the habit of a clown, that was particularly troublesome.

*Sir J. Bev.* Right—he was too much what he seemed to be. You remember how impertinently he followed and teased us, and would know who we were.

*Humph.* I know he has a mind to come into that particular. [*Aside.*

*Sir J. Bev.* Ay, he followed us, till the gentleman, who led the lady in the Indian mantle, presented that gay creature to the rustic, and bid him (like Cymon in the fable) grow polite, by falling in love, and let that worthy old gentleman alone, meaning me. The clown was not reformed, but rudely persisted, and offered to force off my mask; with that the gentleman, throwing off his own, appeared to be my son, and, in his concern for me, tore off that of the nobleman: at this they seized each other, the company called the guards, and, in the surprize, the lady swooned away: upon which my son quitted his adversary, and had now no care but of the lady—when raising her in his arms, 'Art thou gone,' cried he, 'for ever?—forbid it, Heaven!'—She revives at his known voice—and, with the most familiar, though modest gesture, hangs in safety over his shoulders, weeping, but wept as in the arms of one before whom she could give herself a loose, were she not under observation: while she hides her face in his neck, he carefully conveys her from the company.

*Humph.* I have observed this accident has dwelt upon you very strongly.

*Sir J. Bev.* Her uncommon air, her noble modesty, the dignity of her person, and the occasion itself, drew the whole assembly together; and I soon heard it buzzed about she was the adopted daughter of a famous sea-officer, who had served in France. Now, this unexpected and public discovery of my son's so deep concern for her——

*Humph.* Was what, I suppose, alarmed Mr Sealand, in behalf of his daughter, to break off the match?

*Sir J. Bev.* You are right—he came to me yesterday, and said, he thought himself disengaged from the bargain, being credibly informed my son was already married, or worse, to the lady at the masquerade. I palliated matters, and insisted on our agreement; but we parted with little less than a direct breach between us.

*Humph.* Well, sir, and what notice have you taken of all this to my young master?

*Sir J. Bev.* That's what I wanted to debate with you—I have said nothing to him yet—But look ye, Humphrey, if there is so much in this amour of his, that he denies, upon my summons, to marry, I have cause enough to be offended; and then, by my insisting upon his marrying to-day, I shall know how far he is engaged to this lady in masquerade, and from thence only shall be able to take my measures; in the mean time, I would have you find out how far that rogue, his man, is let into his secret—he, I know, will play tricks as much to cross me as to serve his master.

*Humph.* Why do you think so of him, sir? I believe he is no worse than I was for you at your son's age.

*Sir J. Bev.* I see it in the rascal's looks. But I have dwelt on these things too long: I'll go to my son immediately; and, while I'm gone, your part is to convince his rogue, Tom, that I am in earnest. I'll leave him to you.

[*Exit* SIR J. BEV.

*Humph.* Well, though this father and son live as well together as possible, yet their fear of giving each other pain is attended with constant

mutual uneasiness. I am sure I have enough to do to be honest, and yet keep well with them both; but they know I love them, and that makes the task less painful, however. Oh, here's the prince of poor coxcombs, the representative of all the better fed than taught! Ho, ho, Tom! whither so gay and so airy this morning?

*Enter* TOM, *singing.*

*Tom.* Sir, we servants of single gentlemen are another kind of people than you domestic ordinary drudges that do business; we are raised above you: the pleasures of board-wages, tavern-dinners, and many a clear gain, vails, alas! you never heard or dreamt of.

*Humph.* Thou hast follies and vices enough for a man of ten thousand a-year, though it is but as t'other day that I sent for you to town, to put you into Mr Sealand's family, that you might learn a little before I put you to my young master, who is too gentle for training such a rude thing as you were into proper obedience. You then pulled off your hat to every one you met in the street, like a bashful, great, awkward cub, as you were. But your great oaken cudgel, when you were a booby, became you much better than that dangling stick at your button, now you are a fop, that's fit for nothing except it hangs there to be ready for your master's hand when you are impertinent.

*Tom.* Uncle Humphrey, you know my master scorns to strike his servants; you talk as if the world was now just as it was when my old master and you were in your youth——when you went to dinner because it was so much a clock, when the great blow was given in the hall at the pantry-door, and all the family came out of their holes, in such strange dresses, and formal faces, as you see in the pictures in our long gallery in the country.

*Humph.* Why, you wild rogue!

*Tom.* You could not fall to your dinner, till a formal fellow, in a black gown, said something over the meat, as if the cook had not made it ready enough.

*Humph.* Sirrah, who do you prate after?—despising men of sacred characters! I hope you never heard my young master talk so like a profligate!

*Tom.* Sir, I say you put upon me when I first came to town about being orderly, and the doctrine of wearing shams to make linen last clean a fortnight, keeping my clothes fresh, and wearing a frock within doors.

*Humph.* Sirrah, I gave you those lessons, because I supposed, at that time, your master and you might have dined at home every day, and cost you nothing; then you might have made you a good family servant; but the gang you have frequented since at chocolate-houses and taverns, in a continual round of noise and extravagance—

*Tom.* I don't know what you heavy inmates call noise and extravagance; but we gentlemen, who are well fed, and cut a figure, sir, think it a fine life, and that we must be very pretty fellows, who are kept only to be looked at.

*Humph.* Very well, sir—I hope the fashion of being lewd and extravagant, despising of decency and order, is almost at an end, since it is arrived at persons of your quality.

*Tom.* Master Humphrey, ha, ha! you were an unhappy lad to be sent up to town in such queer days as you were. Why now, sir, the lacquies are the men of pleasure of the age; the top gamesters; and many a laced coat about town, have had their education in our party-coloured regiment. We are false lovers, have a taste of music, poetry, billet-doux, dress, politics, ruin damsels; and when we are weary of this lewd town, and have a mind to take up, whip into our masters' wigs and linen, and marry fortunes.

*Humph.* Hey day!

*Tom.* Nay, sir, our order is carried up to the highest dignities and distinctions: step but into the Painted Chamber—and, by our titles, you'd take us all for men of quality—then, again, come down to the Court of Requests, and you shall see us all laying our broken heads together, for the good of the nation; and though we never carry a question *nemine contradicente*, yet this I can say with a safe conscience, (and I wish every gentleman of our cloth could lay his hand upon his heart, and say the same) that I never took so much as a single mug of beer for my vote in all my life.

*Humph.* Sirrah, there is no enduring your extravagance; I'll hear you prate no longer: I wanted to see you to inquire how things go with your master, as far as you understand them: I suppose he knows he is to be married to-day?

*Tom.* Ay, sir, he knows it, and is dressed as gay as the sun; but, between you and I, my dear! he has a very heavy heart under all that gaiety. As soon as he was dressed, I retired, but overheard him sigh in the most heavy manner. He walked thoughtfully to and fro in the room, then went into his closet: when he came out, he gave me this for his mistress, whose maid you know—

*Humph.* Is passionately fond of your fine person.

*Tom.* The poor fool is so tender, and loves to hear me talk of the world, and the plays, operas, and ridottoes for the winter, the Parks and Bell-size for our summer diversions; and lard! says she, you are so wild—but you have a world of humour.

*Humph.* Coxcomb! Well, but why don't you run with your master's letter to Mrs Lucinda, as he ordered you?

*Tom.* Because Mrs Lucinda is not so easily come at as you think for.

*Humph.* Not easily come at! why, sir, are not her father and my old master agreed that she and

Mr Bevil are to be one flesh before to-morrow morning?

*Tom.* It's no matter for that: her mother, it seems, Mrs Sealand, has not agreed to it; and you must know, Mr Humphrey, that, in that family, the grey mare is the better horse.

*Humph.* What dost thou mean?

*Tom.* In one word, Mrs Sealand pretends to have a will of her own, and has provided a relation of hers, a stiff starched philosopher, and a wise fool, for her daughter; for which reason, for these ten days past, she has suffered no message nor letter from my master to come near her.

*Humph.* And where had you this intelligence?

*Tom.* From a foolish fond soul, that can keep nothing from me——one that will deliver this letter, too, if she is rightly managed.

*Humph.* What, her pretty handmaid, Mrs Phillis?

*Tom.* Even she, sir. This is the very hour, you know, she usually comes hither, under a pretence of a visit to our housekeeper forsooth, but in reality to have a glance at———

*Humph.* Your sweet face, I warrant you.

*Tom.* Nothing else in nature. You must know, I love to fret and play with the little wanton———

*Humph.* Play with the little wanton! what will this world come to!

*Tom.* I met her this morning in a new manteau and petticoat, not a bit the worse for her lady's wearing; and she has always new thoughts and new airs with new clothes———then, she never fails to steal some glance or gesture from every visitant at their house, and is indeed the whole town of coquettes at secondhand.——— But here she comes; in one motion she speaks and describes herself better than all the words in the world can.

*Humph.* Then I hope, dear sir! when your own affair is over, you will be so good as to mind your master's with her.

*Tom.* Dear Humphrey! you know my master is my friend, and those are people I never forget—

*Humph.* Sauciness itself! but I'll leave you to do your best for him. [*Exit.*

*Enter* PHILLIS.

*Phil.* Oh, Mr Thomas, is Mrs Sugarkey at home?---Lard! one is almost ashamed to pass along the streets. The town is quite empty, and nobody of fashion left in it; and the ordinary people do so stare to see any thing dressed like a woman of condition, as it were on the same floor with them, pass by. Alas! alas! it is a sad thing to walk! O fortune, fortune!—

*Tom.* What! a sad thing to walk! why, madam Phillis, do you wish yourself lame?

*Phil.* No, Mr Thomas, but I wish I were generally carried in a coach or chair, and of a fortune neither to stand nor go, but to totter, or slide, to be short-sighted, or stare, to fleer in the face, to look distant, to observe, to overlook, yet all become me; and if I were rich, I could twire and loll as well as the best of them. Oh Tom, Tom! is it not a pity that you should be so great a coxcomb, and I so great a coquette, and yet be such poor devils as we are?

*Tom.* Mrs Phillis, I am your humble servant for that———

*Phil.* Yes, Mr Thomas, I know how much you are my humble servant, and know what you said to Mrs Judy, upon seeing her in one of her lady's cast manteaus, that any one would have thought her the lady, and that she had ordered the other to wear it till it sat easy—for now only it was becoming—to my lady it was only a covering, to Mrs Judy it was a habit. This you said after somebody or other. Oh Tom, Tom! thou art as false and as base as the best gentleman of them all: but, you wretch! talk to me no more on the old odious subject: don't, I say.

*Tom.* I know not how to resist your commands, madam. [*In a submissive tone, retiring.*

*Phil.* Commands about parting are grown mighty easy to you of late.

*Tom.* Oh, I have her! I have nettled and put her into the right temper to be wrought upon and set a-prating. [*Aside.*]—Why, truly, to be plain with you, Mrs Phillis, I can take little comfort of late in frequenting your house.

*Phil.* Pray, Mr Thomas, what is it, all of a sudden, offends your nicety at our house?

*Tom.* I don't care to speak particulars, but I dislike the whole.

*Phil.* I thank you, sir; I am a part of that whole.

*Tom.* Mistake me not, good Phillis.

*Phil.* Good Phillis! saucy enough. But however—

*Tom.* I say it is, that thou art a part, which gives me pain for the disposition of the whole. You must know, madam, to be serious, I am a man, at the bottom, of prodigious nice honour. You are too much exposed to company at your house. To be plain, I don't like so many that would be your mistress's lovers whispering to you.

*Phil.* Don't think to put that upon me. You say this, because I wrung you to the heart when I touched your guilty conscience about Judy.

*Tom.* Ah, Phillis, Phillis! if you but knew my heart!

*Phil.* I know too much on't.

*Tom.* Nay, then, poor Crispo's fate and mine are———therefore, give me leave to say, or sing at least, as he does upon the same occasion———

*Se vedette*, &c. [*Sings.*]

*Phil.* What, do you think I'm to be fobbed off

with a song?—I don't question but you have sung the same to Mrs Judy, too.

*Tom.* Don't disparage your charms, good Phillis, with jealousy of so worthless an object; besides, she is a poor hussy; and if you doubt the sincerity of my love, you will allow me true to my interest. You are a fortune, Phillis———

*Phil.* What would the fop be at now? In good time, indeed, you shall be setting up for a fortune!

*Tom.* Dear Mrs Phillis! you have such a spirit that we shall never be dull in marriage, when we come together. But I tell you, you are a fortune, and you have an estate in my hands.

[*He pulls out a purse, she eyes it.*

*Phil.* What pretence have I to what is in your hands, Mr Thomas?

*Tom.* As thus: there are hours, you know, when a lady is neither pleased nor displeased, neither sick nor well, when she lolls or loiters, when she is without desires, from having more of every thing than she knows what to do with.

*Phil.* Well, what then?

*Tom.* When she has not life enough to keep her bright eyes quite open to look at her own dear image in the glass.

*Phil.* Explain thyself, and don't be so fond of thy own prating.

*Tom.* There are also prosperous and good natured moments, as when a knot or a patch is happily fixed, when the complexion particularly flourishes.

*Phil.* Well, what then? I have not patience!

*Tom.* Why, then—or on the like occasions—we servants, who have skill to know how to time business, see, when such a pretty folded thing as this [*Shews a letter.*] may be presented, laid, or dropped, as best suits the present humour. And, madam, because it is a long wearisome journey to run through all the several stages of a lady's temper, my master, who is the most reasonable man in the world, presents you this to bear your charges on the road. [*Gives her the purse.*

*Phil.* Now, you think me a corrupt hussy?

*Tom.* O fy! I only think you'll take the letter.

*Phil.* Nay, I know you do; but I know my own innocence: I take it for my mistress's sake.

*Tom.* I know it, my pretty one! I know it.

*Phil.* Yes, I say I do it, because I would not have my mistress deluded by one who gives no proof of his passion: but I'll talk more of this as you see me on my way home. No, Tom; I assure thee I take this trash of thy master's not for the value of the thing, but as it convinces me he has a true respect for my mistress. I remember a verse to the purpose:

They may be false who languish and complain,
But they, who part with money, never feign.

*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—BEVIL *junior's lodgings.* BEVIL, *junior, reading.*

*Bev.* These moral writers practise virtue after death. This charming vision of Mirza! such an author, consulted in a morning, sets the spirits for the vicissitudes of the day better than the glass does a man's person. But what a day have I to go through! to put on an easy look with an aching heart! If this lady, my father urges me to marry, should not refuse me, my dilemma is insupportable. But why should I fear it? Is not she in equal distress with me? Has not the letter I have sent her this morning confessed my inclination to another? Nay, have I not moral assurances of her engagements, too, to my friend Myrtle? It's impossible but she must give in to it; for sure to be denied is a favour any man may pretend to. It must be so. Well, then, with the assurance of being rejected, I think I may confidently say to my father, I am ready to marry her—then, let me resolve upon (what I am not very good at) an honest dissimulation.

*Enter* TOM.

*Tom.* Sir John Bevil, sir, is in the next room.

*Bev.* Dunce! why did you not bring him in?

*Tom.* I told him, sir, you were in your closet.

*Bev.* I thought you had known, sir, it was my duty to see my father any where.

[*Going himself to the door.*

*Tom.* The devil's in my master! he has always more wit than I have. [*Aside.*

BEVIL, *junior, introducing* SIR JOHN.

*Bev.* Sir, you are the most gallant, the most complaisant of all parents. Sure 'tis not a compliment to say, these lodgings are yours. Why would you not walk in, sir?

*Sir J. Bev.* I was loath to interrupt you unseasonably on your wedding-day.

*Bev.* One to whom I am beholden for my birth-day might have used less ceremony.

*Sir J. Bev.* Well, son, I have intelligence you have writ to your mistress this morning. It would please my curiosity to know the contents of a wedding-day letter, for courtship must then be over.

*Bev.* I assure you, sir, there was no insolence in it upon the prospect of such a vast fortune's being added to our family, but much acknowledgement of the lady's great desert.

*Sir J. Bev.* But, dear Jack, are you in earnest in all this? and will you really marry her?

*Bev.* Did I ever disobey any command of yours, sir? nay, any inclination that I saw you bent upon?

*Sir J. Bev.* Why, I can't say you have, son: but, methinks, in this whole business you have not been so warm as I could have wished you;

you have visited her, it is true; but you have not been particular. Every one knows you can say and do as handsome things as any man; but you have done nothing but lived in the general, being complaisant only.

*Bev.* As I am ever prepared to marry if you bid me, so I am ready to let it alone if you will have me.

HUMPHREY *enters, unobserved.*

*Sir J. Bev.* Look you there now? Why, what am I to think of this so absolute and so indifferent a resignation?

*Bev.* Think that I am still your son, sir. Sir, you have been married, and I have not; and you have, sir, found the inconvenience there is when a man weds with too much love in his head. I have been told, sir, that at the time you married, you made a mighty bustle on the occasion—there was challenging and fighting, scaling walls—locking up the lady—and the gallant under an arrest, for fear of killing all his rivals. Now, sir, I suppose, you having found the ill consequence of these strong passions and prejudices in preference of one woman to another, in case of a man's becoming a widower——

*Sir J. Bev.* How is this?

*Bev.* I say, sir, experience has made you wiser in your care of me; for, sir, since you lost my dear mother, your time has been so heavy, so lonely, and so tasteless, that you are so good as to guard me against the like unhappiness, by marrying me prudentially, by way of bargain and sale; for, as you well judge, a woman, that is espoused for a fortune, is yet a better bargain if she dies; for then a man well enjoys what he did marry, the money, and is disencumbered of what he did not marry, the woman.

*Sir J. Bev.* But, pray, sir, do you think Lucinda, then, a woman of such little merit?

*Bev.* Pardon me, sir; I don't carry it so far, neither; I am rather afraid I shall like her too well; she has, for one of her fortune, a great many needless, and superfluous good qualities.

*Sir J. Bev.* I am afraid, son, there's something I don't see yet—something that's smothered under all this raillery.

*Bev.* Not in the least, sir. If the lady is dressed and ready, you see I am. I suppose the lawyers are ready, too?

*Enter* HUMPHREY.

*Humph.* Sir, Mr Sealand is at the coffee-house, and has sent to speak with you.

*Sir J. Bev.* Oh! that's well! then I warrant the lawyers are ready. Son, you'll be in the way, you say——

*Bev.* If you please, sir, I'll take a chair, and go to Mr Sealand's, where the young lady and I will wait your leisure.

*Sir J. Bev.* By no means—the old fellow will be so vain if he sees——

*Bev.* Aye—but the young lady, sir, will think me so indifferent——

*Humph.* Aye—there you are right—press your readiness to go to the bride—he won't let you. [*Aside to* BEV.

*Bev.* Are you sure of that? [*Aside to* HUMPH.

*Humph.* How he likes being prevented! [*Aside.*

*Sir J. Bev.* No, no; you are an hour or two too early. [*Looking on his watch.*

*Bev.* You'll allow me, sir, to think it too late to visit a beautiful, virtuous, young woman, in the pride and bloom of life, ready to give herself to my arms, and to place her happiness or misery for the future, in being agreeable or displeasing to me.——Call a chair.

*Sir J. Bev.* No, no, no, dear Jack! Besides, this Sealand is a moody old fellow. There's no dealing with some people, but by managing with indifference. We must leave to him the conduct of this day; it is the last of his commanding his daughter.

*Bev.* Sir, he cannot take it ill, that I am impatient to be hers.

*Sir J. Bev.* Pray, let me govern in this matter. You cannot tell how humoursome old fellows are. There's no offering reason to some of them, especially when they are rich. If my son should see him before I've brought old Sealand into better temper, the match would be impracticable. [*Aside.*

*Humph.* Pray, sir, let me beg you to let Mr Bevil go. See whether he will not.—[*Aside to* SIR JOHN.]—[*Then to* BEVIL.]—Pray, sir, command yourself; since you see my master is positive, it is better you should not go.

*Bev.* My father commands me as to the object of my affections, but I hope he will not as to the warmth and height of them.

*Sir J. Bev.* So, I must even leave things as I found them, and, in the mean time, at least keep old Sealand out of his sight. Well, son, I'll go myself, and take orders in your affair—You'll be in the way, I suppose, if I send to you——I'll leave your old friend with you——Humphrey, don't let him stir, d'ye hear. Your servant, your servant. [*Exit* SIR JOHN.

*Humph.* I have a sad time on't, sir, between you and my master—I see you are unwilling, and I know his violent inclinations for the match. I must betray neither, and yet deceive you both, for your common good. Heaven grant a good end of this matter! but there is a lady, sir, that gives your father much trouble and sorrow—— You'll pardon me.

*Bev.* Humphrey, I know thou art a friend to both, and in that confidence I dare tell thee—— That lady—is a woman of honour and virtue.—You may assure yourself I never will marry without my father's consent; but, give me leave to

say, too, this declaration does not come up to a promise that I will take whomsoever he pleases.

*Humph.* Come, sir; I wholly understand you: you would engage my services to free you from this woman whom my master intends you, to make way in time for the woman you have really a mind to.

*Bev.* Honest Humphrey! You have always been an useful friend to my father and myself; I beg you to continue your good offices, and don't let us come to the necessity of a dispute; for, if we should dispute, I must either part with more than life, or lose the best of fathers.

*Humph.* My dear master! were I but worthy to know this secret, that so near concerns you, my life, my all, should be engaged to serve you. This, sir, I dare promise, that I am sure I will, and can, be secret: your trust, at worst, but leaves you where you were; and, if I cannot serve you, I will at once be plain, and tell you so.

*Bev.* That's all I ask. Thou hast made it now my interest to trust thee. Be patient, then, and hear the story of my heart.

*Humph.* I am all attention, sir.

*Bev.* You may remember, Humphrey, that, in my last travels, my father grew uneasy at my making so long a stay at Toulon.

*Humph.* I remember it; he was apprehensive some woman had laid hold of you.

*Bev.* His fears were just; for, there, I first saw this lady: she is of English birth: her father's name was Danvers, a younger brother of an ancient family, and originally an eminent merchant of Bristol, who, upon repeated misfortunes, was reduced to go privately to the Indies. In this retreat, Providence again grew favourable to his industry, and, in six years time, restored him to his former fortunes. On this, he sent directions over, that his wife and little family should follow him to the Indies. His wife, impatient to obey such welcome orders, would not wait the leisure of a convoy, but took the first occasion of a single ship; and, with her husband's sister only, and this daughter, then scarce seven years old, undertook the fatal voyage: for here, poor creature, she lost her liberty and life: she and her family, with all they had, were unfortunately taken by a privateer from Toulon. Being thus made a prisoner, though, as such, not ill-treated, yet the fright, the shock, and the cruel disappointment, seized with such violence upon her unhealthy frame, she sickened, pined, and died at sea.

*Humph.* Poor soul! Oh, the helpless infant!

*Bev.* Her sister yet survived, and had the care of her; the captain, too, proved to have humanity, and became a father to her; for, having himself married an English woman, and being childless, he brought home into Toulon this her little countrywoman, this orphan, I may call her, presenting her, with all her dead mother's moveables of value, to his wife, to be educated as his own adopted daughter.

*Humph.* Fortune here seemed again to smile on her.

*Bev.* Only to make her frowns more terrible! for, in his height of fortune, this captain, too, her benefactor, unfortunately was killed at sea, and, dying intestate, his estate fell wholly to an advocate, his brother, who, coming soon to take possession, there found, among his other riches, this blooming virgin at his mercy.

*Humph.* He durst not, sure, abuse his power?

*Bev.* No wonder if his pampered blood was fired at the sight of her. In short, he loved; but, when all arts and gentle means had failed to move, he offered, too, his menaces in vain, denouncing vengeance on her cruelty, demanding her to account for all her maintenance from her childhood, seized on her little fortune as his own inheritance, and was dragging her by violence to prison, when Providence at the instant interposed, and sent me, by miracle, to relieve her.

*Humph.* 'Twas Providence, indeed! but pray, sir, after all this trouble, how came this lady at last to England?

*Bev.* The disappointed advocate, finding she had so unexpected a support, on cooler thoughts descended to a composition, which I, without her knowledge, secretly discharged.

*Humph.* That generous concealment made the obligation double.

*Bev.* Having thus obtained her liberty, I prevailed, not without some difficulty, to see her safe to England, where we no sooner arrived, but my father, jealous of my being imprudently engaged, immediately proposed this other fatal match, that hangs upon my quiet.

*Humph.* I find, sir, you are irrecoverably fixed upon this lady.

*Bev.* As my vital life dwells in my heart—— and yet you see what I do to please my father; walk in this pageantry of dress, this splendid covering of sorrow——But, Humphrey, you have your lesson.

*Humph.* Now, sir, I have but one material question——

*Bev.* Ask it freely.

*Humph.* Is it then your own passion for this secret lady, or hers for you, that gives you this aversion to the match your father has proposed you?

*Bev.* I shall appear, Humphrey, more romantic in my answer, than in all the rest of my story; for, though I dote on her to death, and have no little reason to believe she has the same thoughts for me, yet, in all my acquaintance and utmost privacies with her, I never once directly told her that I loved.

*Humph.* How was it possible to avoid it?

*Bev.* My tender obligations to my father have laid so inviolable a restraint upon my conduct, that, till I have his consent to speak, I am de-

termined, on that subject, to be dumb for ever.—An honourable retreat shall always be at least within my power, however fortune may dispose of me; the lady may repine, perhaps, but never shall reproach me.

*Humph.* Well, sir, to your praise be it spoken, you are certainly the most unfashionable lover in Great Britain.

*Enter* TOM.

*Tom.* Sir, Mr Myrtle's at the next door, and, if you are at leisure, will be glad to wait on you.

*Bev.* Whenever he pleases—Hold, Tom; did you receive no answer to my letter?

*Tom.* Sir, I was desired to call again; for I was told her mother would not let her be out of her sight; but, about an hour hence, Mrs Phillis said I should have one.

*Bev.* Very well.

*Humph.* Sir, I will take another opportunity; in the mean time, I only think it proper to tell you, that, from a secret I know, you may appear to your father as forward as you please to marry Lucinda, without the least hazard of its coming to a conclusion. Sir, your most obedient servant.

*Bev.* Honest Humphrey! Continue but my friend in this exigence, and you shall always find me yours.—[*Exit* HUMPH.]—I long to hear how my letter has succeeded with Lucinda. But I think it cannot fail; for, at worst, were it possible she should take it ill, her resentment of my indifference may as probably occasion a delay as her taking it right. Poor Myrtle! What terrors must he be in all this while!—Since he knows she is offered to me, and refused to him, there is no conversing or taking any measures with him, for his own service. But I ought to bear with my friend, and use him as one in adversity.

All his disquietudes by my own I prove;
For none exceeds perplexity in love.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT II.

### SCENE II.—*Continues.*

*Enter* BEVIL *and* TOM.

*Tom.* SIR, Mr Myrtle.

*Bev.* Very well. Do you step again, and wait for an answer to my letter.

[*Exit* TOM.

*Enter* MYRTLE.

Well, Charles, why so much care in thy countenance? Is there any thing in this world deserves it? You, who used to be so gay, so open, so vacant!

*Myr.* I think we have, of late, changed complexions. You, who used to be much the graver man, are now all air in your behaviour. But the cause of my concern may, for aught I know, be the same object that gives you all this satisfaction. In a word, I am told that you are this very day (and your dress confirms me in it) to be married to Lucinda.

*Bev.* You are not misinformed. Nay, put not on the terrors of a rival, till you hear me out. I shall disoblige the best of fathers, if I don't seem ready to marry Lucinda; and you know I have ever told you, you might make use of my secret resolution, never to marry her, for your own service as you please: but I am now driven to the extremity of immediately refusing, or complying, unless you help me to escape the match.

*Myr.* Escape, sir! neither her merit nor her fortune are below your acceptance. Escaping, do you call it?

*Bev.* Dear sir! Do you wish I should desire the match?

*Myr.* No——But such is my humourous and sickly state of mind, since it has been able to relish nothing but Lucinda, that, though I must owe my happiness to your aversion to this marriage, I cannot bear to hear her spoken of with levity, or unconcern.

*Bev.* Pardon me, sir; I shall transgress that way no more. She has understanding, beauty, shape, complexion, wit——

*Myr.* Nay, dear Bevil! Don't speak of her as if you loved her, neither.

*Bev.* Why, then, to give you ease at once, though I allow Lucinda to have good sense, wit, beauty, and virtue, I know another in whom these qualities appear to me more amiable than in her.

*Myr.* There you spoke like a reasonable and good-natured friend. When you acknowledge her merit, and own your prepossession for another, at once you gratify my fondness, and cure my jealousy.

*Bev.* But all this while you take no notice, you have no apprehension, of another man, that has twice the fortune of either of us.

*Myr.* Cimberton! Hang him, a formal, philosophical, pedantic coxcomb!—for the sot, with all these crude notions of divers things, under the direction of great vanity and very little judgment, shews his strongest bias is avarice, which is so predominant in him, that he will examine the limbs of his mistress with the caution of a jockey, and pays no more compliment to her personal charms than if she were a mere breeding animal.

*Bev.* Are you sure that is not affected? I have known some women sooner set on fire by that sort of negligence, than by all the blaze and ceremony of a court.

*Myr.* No, no; hang him! the rogue has no art; it is pure simple innocence and stupidity.

*Bev.* Yet, with all this, I don't take him for a fool.

*Myr.* I own the man is not a natural; he has a very quick sense, though a very slow understanding—he says, indeed, many things that want only the circumstances of time and place to be very just and agreeable.

*Bev.* Well, you may be sure of me, if you can disappoint him; but my intelligence says, the mother has actually sent for the conveyancer to draw articles for his marriage with Lucinda, though those for mine with her are, by her father's order, ready for signing; but it seems she has not thought fit to consult either him or his daughter in the matter.

*Myr.* Pshaw! a poor troublesome woman!—Neither Lucinda nor her father will ever be brought to comply with it—besides, I am sure Cimberton can make no settlement upon her, without the concurrence of his great uncle, sir Geoffry, in the west

*Bev.* Well, sir, and I can tell you, that is the very point that is now laid before her counsel, to know whether a firm settlement can be made without this uncle's actually joining in it. Now, pray consider, sir, when my affair with Lucinda comes, as it soon must, to an open rupture, how are you sure that Cimberton's fortune may not then tempt her father, too, to hear his proposals?

*Myr.* There you are right, indeed; that must be provided against. Do you know who are her counsel?

*Bev.* Yes, for your service I have found out that, too: they are, serjeant Bramble and old Target.—By the way, they are neither of them known in the family: now, I was thinking why you might not put a couple of false counsels upon her, to delay and confound matters a little—besides, it may probably let you into the bottom of her whole design against you.

*Myr.* As how, pray?

*Bev.* Why, can't you slip on a black wig and a gown, and be old Bramble yourself?

*Myr.* Ha! I don't dislike it—but what shall I do for a brother in the case?

*Bev.* What think you of my fellow, Tom? The rogue's intelligent, and is a good mimic; all his part will be but to stutter heartily; for that's old Target's case—nay, it would be an immoral thing to mock him, were it not that his impatience is the occasion of its breaking out to that degree.—The conduct of the scene will chiefly lie upon you.

*Myr.* I like it of all things! if you'll send Tom to my chambers, I will give him full instructions. This will certainly give me occasion to raise difficulties, to puzzle or confound her project for a while, at least.

*Bev.* I warrant you success; so far we are right, then. And now, Charles, your apprehension of my marrying her is all you have to get over.

*Myr.* Dear Bevil! though I know you are my friend, yet, when I abstract myself from my own interest in the thing, I know no objection she can make to you, or you to her; and therefore hope——

*Bev.* Dear Myrtle! I am as much obliged to you for the cause of your suspicion, as I am offended at the effect; but, be assured, I am taking measures for your certain security, and that all things, with regard to me, will end in your entire satisfaction.

*Myr.* Well; I'll promise you to be as easy and as confident as I can, though I cannot but remember that I have more than life at stake on your fidelity. [*Going.*

*Bev.* Then, depend upon it, you have no chance against you.

*Myr.* Nay, no ceremony; you know I must be going. [*Exit* MYRTLE.

*Bev.* Well; this is another instance of the perplexities which arise, too, in faithful friendship. We must often in this life go on in our good offices, even under the displeasure of those to whom we do them, in compassion to their weaknesses and mistakes. But all this while poor Indiana is tortured with the doubt of me; she has no support or comfort but in my fidelity, yet sees me daily pressed to marriage with another. How painful, in such a crisis, must be every hour she thinks on me! I'll let her see, at least, my conduct to her is not changed: I'll take this opportunity to visit her; for though the religious vow I have made to my father restrains me from ever marrying without his approbation, yet that confines me not from seeing a virtuous woman, that is the pure delight of my eyes, and the guiltless joy of my heart. But the best condition of human life is but a gentler misery!

To hope for perfect happiness is vain,
And love has ever its allays of pain. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—INDIANA'S *lodgings.*

*Enter* ISABELLA *and* INDIANA.

*Isa.* Yes; I say 'tis artifice, dear child! I say to thee, again and again, 'tis all skill and management.

*Ind.* Will you persuade me there can be an ill design in supporting me in the condition of a woman of quality? attended, dressed, and lodged, like one in my appearance abroad, and my furniture at home, every way in the most sumptuous manner, and he that does it has an artifice, a design in it?

*Isa.* Yes, yes.

*Ind.* And all this without so much as explaining to me, that all about me comes from him?

*Isa.* Ay, ay; the more for that—that keeps the title to all you have the more in him.

*Ind.* The more in him!———he scorns the thought——

*Isa.* Then he—he—he———

*Ind.* Well; be not so eager.——If he's an ill man, let's look into his stratagems: here is another of them: [*Shewing a letter.*] here's two hundred and fifty pounds in bank-notes, with these words; 'To pay for the set of dressing-plate which will be brought home to-morrow.' Why, dear aunt! now here's another piece of skill for you, which I own I cannot comprehend—and it is with a bleeding heart I hear you say any thing to the disadvantage of Mr Bevil. When he is present, I look upon him as one to whom I owe my life, and the support of it; then, again, as the man who loves me with sincerity and honour. When his eyes are cast another way, and I dare survey him, my heart is painfully divided between shame and love—Oh! I could tell you—

*Isa.* Oh! you need not; I imagine all this for you.

*Ind.* This is my state of mind in his presence; and, when he is absent, you are ever dinning my ears with notions of the arts of men; that his hidden bounty, his respectful conduct, his careful provision for me, after his preserving me from the utmost misery, are certain signs he means nothing but to make I know not what of me.

*Isa.* Oh! you have a sweet opinion of him truly!

*Ind.* I have, when I am with him, ten thousand things, besides my sex's natural decency and shame, to suppress my heart, that yearns to thank, to praise, to say it loves him. I say thus it is with me, while I see him; and, in his absence, I am entertained with nothing but your endeavours to tear this amiable image from my heart, and, in its stead, to place a base dissembler, an artful invader of my happiness, my innocence, my honour!

*Isa.* Ah, poor soul! has not his plot taken? don't you die for him? has not the way he has taken been the most proper with you? Oh ho! he has sense, and has judged the thing right.

*Ind.* Go on, then, since nothing can answer you; say what you will of him.——Heigh ho!

*Isa.* Heigh ho! indeed. It is better to say so, as you are now, than as many others are. There are, among the destroyers of women, the gentle, the generous, the mild, the affable, the humble, who all, soon after their success in their designs, turn to the contrary of those characters. I will own to you, Mr Bevil carries his hypocrisy the best of any man living; but still he is a man, and therefore a hypocrite. They have usurped an exemption from shame, from any baseness, any cruelty, towards us. They embrace, without love; they make vows, without conscience of obligation; they are partners, nay, seducers, to the crime, wherein they pretend to be less guilty.



*Ind.* That's truly observed. [*Aside.*] But what's all this to Bevil?

*Isa.* This is to Bevil and all mankind. Trust not those who will think the worse of you for your confidence in them; serpents who lie in wait for doves. Won't you be on your guard against those who would betray you? won't you doubt those who would contemn you for believing them? Take it from me, fair and natural dealing is to invite injuries; 'tis bleating to escape wolves who would devour you: Such is the world, and such (since the behaviour of one man to myself) have I believed all the rest of the sex. [*Aside.*

*Ind.* I will not doubt the truth of Bevil, I will not doubt it: he has not spoken it by an organ that is given to lying: his eyes are all that have ever told me that he was mine. I know his virtue, I know his filial piety, and ought to trust his management with a father, to whom he has uncommon obligations. What have I to be concerned for? My lesson is very short. If he takes me for ever, my purpose of life is only to please him. If he leaves me, (which Heaven avert!) I know he'll do it nobly; and I shall have nothing to do but learn to die, after worse than death has happened to me.

*Isa.* Aye, do persist in your credulity! flatter yourself that a man of his figure and fortune will make himself the jest of the town, and marry a handsome beggar for love!

*Ind.* The town! I must tell you, madam, the fools that laugh at Mr Bevil will but make themselves more ridiculous; his actions are the result of thinking, and he has sense enough to make even virtue fashionable.

*Isa.* O' my conscience he has turned her head! Come, come; if he were the honest fool you take him for, why has he kept you here these three weeks, without sending you to Bristol in search of your father, your family, and your relations?

*Ind.* I am convinced he still designs it; and that nothing keeps him here but the necessity of not coming to an open breach with his father in regard to the match he has proposed him: besides, has he not writ to Bristol? and has not he advice that my father has not been heard of there almost these twenty years?

*Isa.* All sham, mere evasion; he is afraid, if he should carry you thither, your honest relations may take you out of his hands, and so blow up all his wicked hopes at once.

*Ind.* Wicked hopes! did I ever give him any such?

*Isa.* Has he ever given you any honest ones? Can you say in your conscience he has ever once offered to marry you?

*Ind.* No; but by his behaviour I am convinced he will offer it the moment 'tis in his power, or consistent with his honour, to make such a promise good to me.

*Isa.* His honour!

*Ind.* I will rely upon it; therefore, desire you will not make my life uneasy by these ungrateful jealousies of one to whom I am and wish to be obliged; for from his integrity alone I have resolved to hope for happiness.

*Isa.* Nay, I have done my duty; if you won't see, at your peril be it.

*Ind.* Let it be. This is his hour of visiting me. [*Apart.*

*Isa.* Oh! to be sure, keep up your form; do not see him in a bed-chamber. This is pure prudence, when she is liable, whenever he meets her to be conveyed whither he pleases.

[*Apart.*

*Ind.* All the rest of my life is but waiting till he comes: I live only while I'm with him. [*Exit.*

*Isa.* Well, go thy way, thou wilful innocent! I once had almost as much love for a man who poorly left me to marry an estate—and I am now, against my will, what they call an old maid—but I will not let the peevishness of that condition grow upon me——only keep up the suspicion of it, to prevent this creature's being any other than a virgin, except upon proper terms.

[*Exit.*

*Re-enter* INDIANA, *speaking to a servant.*

*Ind.* Desire Mr Bevil to walk in. Design! impossible! a base designing mind could never think of what he hourly puts in practice—and yet, since the late rumour of his marriage, he seems more reserved than formerly—he sends in, too, before he sees me, to know if I am at leisure. Such new respect may cover coldness in the heart—it certainly makes me thoughtful—I'll know the worst at once; I'll lay such fair occasions in his way, that it shall be impossible to avoid an explanation——for these doubts are insupportable. But see, he comes and clears them all.

*Enter* BEVIL, *Jun.*

*Bev.* Madam, your most obedient. I am afraid I broke in upon your rest last night—'twas very late before we parted, but 'twas your own fault; I never saw you in such agreeable humour.

*Ind.* I am extremely glad we are both pleased; for I thought I never saw you better company.

*Bev.* Me, madam! you rally; I said very little.

*Ind.* But I am afraid you heard me say a great deal; and when a woman is in the talking vein, the most agreeable thing a man can do, you know, is to have patience to hear her.

*Bev.* Then 'tis pity, madam, you should ever be silent, that we might be always agreeable to one another.

*Ind.* If I had your talent or power to make my actions speak for me, I might, indeed, be silent, and yet pretend to something more than the agreeable.

*Bev.* If I might be vain of any thing in my power, madam, it is, that my understanding, from all your sex, has marked you out as the deserving object of my esteem.

*Ind.* Should I think I deserve this, it were enough to make my vanity forfeit the esteem you offer me.

*Bev.* How so, madam?

*Ind.* Because esteem is the result of reason, and to deserve it from good sense the height of human glory.—Nay, I had rather a man of honour should pay me that, than all the homage of a sincere and humble love.

*Bev.* You certainly distinguish right, madam; love often kindles from external merit only—

*Ind.* But esteem arises from a higher source, the merit of the soul———

*Bev.* True———and great souls only can deserve it. [*Bowing respectfully.*

*Ind.* Now I think they are greater still, that can so charitably part with it.

*Bev.* Now, madam, you make me vain, since the utmost pride and pleasure of my life is, that I esteem you---as I ought.

*Ind.* [*Aside.*] As he ought! still more perplexing! he neither saves nor kills my hope.

*Bev.* But, madam, we grow grave, methinks---let's find some other subject.——Pray how did you like the opera last night?

*Ind.* First give me leave to thank you for my tickets.

*Bev.* Oh! your servant, madam.---But pray tell me; you, now, who are never partial to the fashion, I fancy, must be the properest judge of a mighty dispute among the ladies, that is, whether Crispo or Griselda is the more agreeable entertainment.

*Ind.* With submission, now, I cannot be a proper judge of this question.

*Bev.* How so, madam?

*Ind.* Because I find I have a partiality for one of them.

*Bev.* Pray, which is that?

*Ind.* I do not know—there's something in that rural cottage of Griselda, her forlorn condition, her poverty, her solitude, her resignation, her innocent slumbers, and that lulling *dolce sogno* that's sung over her, it had an effect upon me, that---In short, I never was so well deceived at any of them.

*Bev.* Oh! now, then, I can account for the dispute: Griselda, it seems, is the distress of an injured, innocent woman; Crispo that only of a man in the same condition; therefore, the men are mostly concerned for Crispo, and, by a natural indulgence, both sexes for Griselda.

*Ind.* So that judgment, you think, ought to be for one, though fancy and complaisance have got ground for the other. Well, I believe you will never give me leave to dispute with you on any

subject, for I own Crispo has its charms for me, too, though, in the main, all the pleasure the best opera gives us, is but a keen sensation.------ Methinks, 'tis pity the mind can't have a little more share in the entertainment.---The music is certainly fine; but, in my thoughts, there's none of your composers come up to old Shakespeare and Otway.

*Bev.* How, madam! why, if a woman of your sense were to say this in a drawing-room———

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Sir, here's Signor Carbonelli says he waits your commands in the next room.

*Bev.* A propos! you were saying yesterday, madam, you had a mind to hear him.—Will you give him leave to entertain you now?

*Ind.* By all means. Desire the gentleman to walk in. [*Exit Servant.*

*Bev.* I fancy you will find something in his hand that is uncommon.

*Ind.* You are always finding ways, Mr Bevil, to make life seem less tedious to me.

*Enter music-master.*

When the gentleman pleases.

[*After a sonata is played,* BEVIL *jun. waits on the master to the door, &c.*]

*Bev.* You smile, madam, to see me so complaisant to one whom I pay for his visit. Now, I own, I think it not enough barely to pay those whose talents are superior to our own (I mean such talents as would become our condition if we had them); methinks we ought to do something more than barely gratify them for what they do at our command, only because their fortune is below us.

*Ind.* You say I smile; I assure you it was a smile of approbation; for, indeed, I cannot but think it the distinguishing part of a gentleman to make his superiority of fortune as easy to his inferiors as he can.—Now, once more to try him. [*Aside.*]——I was saying just now, I believe you would never let me dispute with you, and I dare say it will always be so: however, I must have your opinion upon a subject which created a debate between my aunt and me just before you came hither; she would needs have it, that no man ever does any extraordinary kindness or service to a woman but for his own sake.

*Bev.* Well, madam! indeed I can't but be of her mind.

*Ind.* What, though he should maintain and support her, without demanding any thing of her on her part!

*Bev.* Why, madam, is making an expence in the service of a valuable woman, (for such I must suppose her) though she should never do him any favour, nay, though she should never know who did her such service, such a mighty heroic business?

*Ind.* Certainly! I should think he must be a man of an uncommon mould.

*Bev.* Dear madam! why so? 'tis but at best a better taste in expence. To bestow upon one, whom he may think one of the ornaments of the whole creation; to be conscious that, from his superfluity, an innocent, a virtuous spirit is supported above the temptations, the sorrows of life; that he sees satisfaction, health, and gladness in her countenance, while he enjoys the happiness of seeing her: (as that I will suppose, too, or he must be too abstracted, too insensible) I say, if he is allowed to delight in that prospect, alas! what mighty matter is there in all this?

*Ind.* No mighty matter in so disinterested a friendship!

*Bev.* Disinterested! I can't think him so. Your hero, madam, is no more than what every gentleman ought to be, and, I believe, very many are—— he is only one who takes more delight in reflections, than in sensations; he is more pleased with thinking than eating; that's the utmost you can say of him.—Why, madam, a greater expence than all this, men lay out upon an unnecessary stable of horses.

*Ind.* Can you be sincere in what you say?

*Bev.* You may depend upon it. If you know any such man, he does not love dogs inordinately?

*Ind.* No, that he does not.

*Bev.* Nor cards, nor dice?

*Ind.* No.

*Bev.* Nor bottle companions?

*Ind.* No.

*Bev.* Nor loose women?

*Ind.* No; I am sure he does not.

*Bev.* Take my word, then, if your admired hero is not liable to any of these kind of demands, there's no such pre-eminence in this as you imagine: nay, this way of expence you speak of, is what exalts and raises him that has a taste for it; and, at the same time, his delight is incapable of satiety, disgust, or penitence.

*Ind.* But still I insist, his having no private interest in the action makes it prodigious, almost incredible.

*Bev.* Dear madam! I never knew you more mistaken. Why, who can be more an usurer than he, who lays out his money in such valuable purchases? If pleasure be worth purchasing, how great a pleasure is it to him who has a true taste of life, to ease an aching heart; to see the human countenance lighted up into smiles of joy, on the receipt of a bit of ore, which is superfluous, and otherwise useless, in a man's own pocket! What could a man do better with his cash? This is the effect of a humane disposition, where there is only a general tie of nature and common necessity; what, then, must it be, when we serve an object of merit, of admiration!

*Ind.* Well, the more you argue against it, the more I shall admire the generosity.

*Bev.* Nay—then, madam, 'tis time to fly, after a declaration that my opinion strengthens my adversary's argument—I had best hasten to my appointment with Mr Myrtle, and be gone while we are friends, and—before things are brought to an extremity.— [*Exit carelessly.*

*Enter* ISABELLA.

*Isa.* Well, madam, what think you of him now, pray?

*Ind.* I protest I begin to fear he is wholly disinterested in what he does for me. On my heart, he has no other view but the mere pleasure of doing it, and has neither good or bad designs upon me!

*Isa.* Ah, dear niece, don't be in fear of both; I'll warrant you, you will know time enough that he is not indifferent.

*Ind.* You please me when you tell me so; for if he has any wishes towards me, I know he will not pursue them but with honour.

*Isa.* I wish I were as confident of one as the other.—I saw the respectful downcast of his eye when you catched him gazing at you during the music. He, I warrant, was surprised, as if he had been taken stealing your watch. Oh! the undissembled guilty look!

*Ind.* But did you observe any thing really? I thought he looked most charmingly graceful. How engaging is modesty in a man, when one knows there is a great mind within! So tender a confusion, and yet, in other respects, so much himself! so collected, so dauntless, so determined!

*Isa.* Ah, niece! there is a sort of bashfulness which is the best engine to carry on a shameless purpose. Some men's modesty serves their wickedness, as hypocrisy gains the respect due to piety. But I will own to you, there is one hopeful symptom, if there could be such a thing as a disinterested lover; but till—till—till—

*Ind.* Till what?

*Isa.* Till I know whether Mr Myrtle and Mr Bevil are really friends or foes—and that I will be convinced of before I sleep; for you shall not be deceived. [*Exit* ISABELLA.

*Ind.* I'm sure I never shall, if your fears can guard me. In the mean time, I'll wrap myself up in the integrity of my own heart, nor dare to doubt of his.

As conscious honour all his actions steers,
So conscious innocence dispels my fears.

[*Exit.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.—SEALAND'S *house.*

*Enter* TOM, *meeting* PHILLIS.

*Tom.* Well, Phillis!———What! with a face as if you had never seen me before?——What a work have I to do now! She has seen some new visitant at their house, whose airs she has catched, and is resolved to practise them upon me. Numberless are the changes she'll dance through, before she'll answer this plain question, *videlicet*, Have you delivered my master's letter to your lady? Nay, I know her too well to ask an account of it in an ordinary way; I'll be in my airs as well as she. [*Aside.*]—Well, madam, as unhappy as you are at present pleased to make me, I would not in the general be any other than what I am; I would not be a bit wiser, a bit richer, a bit taller, a bit shorter, than I am at this instant. [*Looking stedfastly at her.*

*Phil.* Did ever any body doubt, master Thomas, but that you were extremely satisfied with your sweet self?

*Tom.* I am, indeed.—The thing I have least reason to be satisfied with, is my fortune; and I am glad of my poverty; perhaps, if I were rich, I should overlook the finest woman in the world, that wants nothing but riches to be thought so.

*Phil.* How prettily was that said! But I'll have a great deal more before I'll say one word. [*Aside.*

*Tom.* I should perhaps have been stupidly above her, had I not been her equal; and, by not being her equal, never had opportunity of being her slave. I am my master's servant for hire; I am my mistress's from choice, would she but approve my passion.

*Phil.* I think it is the first time I ever heard you speak of it with any sense of anguish—if you really do suffer any.

*Tom.* Ah, Phillis! can you doubt, after what you have seen?

*Phil.* I know not what I have seen, nor what I have heard; but, since I am at leisure, you may tell me when you fell in love with me, how you fell in love with me, and what you have suffered, or are ready to suffer, for me.

*Tom.* Oh, the unmerciful jade! when I'm in haste about my master's letter—but I must go through it. [*Aside.*]—Ah! too well I remember when, and how, and on what occasion, I was first surprised. It was on the first of April, one thousand seven hundred and fifteen, I came into Mr Sealand's service; I was then a hobble-de-hoy, and you a pretty little tight girl, a favourite handmaid of the housekeeper.——At that time, we neither of us knew what was in us. I remember, I was ordered to get out of the window, one pair of stairs, to rub the sashes clean—the person employed on the inner side was your charming self, whom I had never seen before.

*Phil.* I think I remember the silly accident.—What made ye, you oaf, ready to fall down into the street?

*Tom.* You know not, I warrant you—you could not guess what surprised me—you took no delight when you immediately grew wanton in your conquest, and put your lips close, and breathed upon the glass; and, when my lips approached, a dirty cloth you rubbed against my face, and hid your beauteous form; when I again drew near, you spit, and rubbed, and smiled, at my undoing.

*Phil.* What silly thoughts you men have!

*Tom.* We were Pyramus and Thisbe—but ten times harder was my fate: Pyramus could peep only through a wall; I saw her, saw my Thisbe, in all her beauty, but as much kept from her as if a hundred walls between; for there was more, there was her will against me.—Would she but relent!——Oh, Phillis! Phillis! shorten my torment, and declare you pity me.

*Phil.* I believe 'tis very sufferable; the pain is not so exquisite, but that you may bear it a little longer.

*Tom.* Oh, my charming Phillis! if all depended on my fair one's will, I could with glory suffer——but, dearest creature! consider our miserable state.

*Phil.* How! miserable!

*Tom.* We are miserable to be in love, and under the command of others than those we love—with that generous passion in the heart, to be sent to and fro on errands, called, checked, and rated for the meanest trifles——Oh, Phillis! you don't know how many china cups and glasses my passion for you has made me break: you have broken my fortune as well as my heart.

*Phil.* Well, Mr Thomas, I cannot but own to you that I believe your master writes, and you speak, the best of any men in the world. Never was a woman so well pleased with a letter, as my young lady was with his; and this is an answer to it. [*Gives him a letter.*

*Tom.* This was well done, my dearest! Consider, we must strike out some pretty livelihood for ourselves, by closing their affairs: it will be nothing for them to give us a little being of our own, some small tenement out of their large possessions: whatever they give us, it will be more than what they keep for themselves: one acre with Phillis, would be worth a whole country without her.

*Phil.* Oh, could I but believe you!

*Tom.* If not the utterance, believe the touch, of my lips. [*Kisses her.*

*Phil.* There's no contradicting you. How closely you argue, Tom!

*Tom.* And will closer, in due time; but I must hasten with this letter, to hasten towards the possession of you—then, Phillis, consider how I must be revenged (look to it!) of all your skittishness, shy looks, and, at best, but coy compliances.

*Phil.* Oh, Tom! you grow wanton and sensual, as my lady calls it: I must not endure it. Oh, foh! you are a man, an odious, filthy, male creature! you should behave, if you had a right sense, or were a man of sense, like Mr Cimberton, with distance and indifference; or, let me see, some other becoming hard word, with seeming in—in—advertency, and not rush on as if you were seizing a prey. But hush!—the ladies are coming.——Good Tom, don't kiss me above once, and be gone.—Lard! we have been fooling and toying, and not considered the main business of our masters and mistresses.

*Tom.* Why, their business is to be fooling and toying, as soon as the parchments are ready.

*Phil.* Well remembered—Parchments—my lady, to my knowledge, is preparing writings between her coxcomb cousin, Cimberton, and my mistress, though my master has an eye to the parchments already prepared between your master, Mr Bevil, and my mistress; and I believe my mistress herself has signed and sealed in her heart to Mr Myrtle.—Did I not bid you kiss me but once, and be gone? But I know you won't be satisfied.

*Tom.* No, you smooth creature! how should I? [*Kisses her hand.*

*Phil.* Well, since you are humble, or so cool, as to ravish my hand only, I'll take my leave of you like a great lady, and you a man of quality. [*They salute formally.*

*Tom.* Pox of all this state! [*Offers to kiss her more closely.*

*Phil.* No, pr'ythee, Tom, mind your business. We must follow that interest which will take, but endeavour at that which will be most for us, and we like most.——Oh, here is my young mistress! [TOM *taps her neck behind, and kisses his fingers.*] Go, ye liquorish fool! [*Exit* TOM.

*Enter* LUCINDA.

*Luc.* Who was that you were hurrying away?

*Phil.* One that I had no mind to part with.

*Luc.* Why did you turn him away, then?

*Phil.* For your ladyship's service; to carry your ladyship's letter to his master. I could hardly get the rogue away.

*Luc.* Why, has he so little love for his master?

*Phil.* No; but he has so much love for his mistress.

*Luc.* But I thought I heard him kiss you: why do you suffer that?

*Phil.* Why, madam, we vulgar take it to be a sign of love. We servants, we poor people, that have nothing but our persons to bestow or treat for, are forced to deal and bargain by way of sample; and therefore, as we have no parchments or wax necessary in our agreements, we squeeze with our hands, and seal with our lips, to ratify vows and promises.

*Luc.* But can't you trust one another, without such earnest down?

*Phil.* We don't think it safe, any more than you gentry, to come together without deeds executed.

*Luc.* Thou art a pert, merry hussy.

*Phil.* I wish, madam, your lover and you were as happy as Tom and your servant are.

*Luc.* You grow impertinent.

*Phil.* I have done, madam; and I won't ask you what you intend to do with Mr Myrtle, what your father will do with Mr Bevil, nor what you all, especially my lady, mean by admitting Mr Cimberton as particularly here as if he were married to you already; nay, you are married actually, as far as people of quality are.

*Luc.* How's that?

*Phil.* You have different beds in the same house.

*Luc.* Pshaw!——I have a very great value for Mr Bevil, but have absolutely put an end to his pretensions, in the letter I gave you for him; but my father, in his heart, still has a mind to him, were it not for this woman they talk of; and I am apt to imagine he is married to her, or never designs to marry at all.

*Phil.* Then, Mr Myrtle———

*Luc.* He had my parents' leave to apply to me, and, by that, he has won me and my affections: who is to have this body of mine, without them, it seems, is nothing to me: my mother says, 'tis indecent for me to let my thoughts stray about the person of my husband; nay, she says a maid rightly virtuous, though she may have been where her lover was a thousand times, should not have made observations enough to know him from another man, when she sees him in a third place.

*Phil.* That's more than the severity of a nun; for, not to see when one may, is hardly possible; not to see when one can't, is very easy: at this rate, madam, there are a great many whom you have not seen, who——

*Luc.* Mamma says, the first time you see your husband, should be at that instant he is made so. When your father, with the help of the minister, gives you to him, then you are to see him, then you are to observe and take notice of him, because, then, you are to obey him.

*Phil.* But does not my lady remember you are to love, as well as to obey?

*Luc.* To love is a passion; 'tis a desire; and we must have no desires. Oh! I cannot endure the reflection! With what insensibility on my part, with what more than patience, have I been exposed and offered to some awkward booby or other in every county of Great Britain!

*Phil.* Indeed, madam, I wonder I never heard you speak of it before with this indignation.

*Luc.* Every corner of the land has presented me with a wealthy coxcomb: as fast as one treaty has gone off, another has come on, till my name and person have been the tittle-tattle of the whole town.——What is this world come to! no shame left! to be bartered for like the beasts of the field; and that in such an instance as coming together, to an entire familiarity, and union of soul and body; and this without being so much as well-wishers to each other, but for increase of fortune!

*Phil.* But, madam, all these vexations will end very soon in one for all: Mr Cimberton is your mother's kinsman, and three hundred years an older gentleman than any lover you ever had; for which reason, with that of his prodigious large estate, she is resolved on him, and has sent to consult the lawyers accordingly; nay, has, whether you know it or no, been in treaty with sir Geoffrey, who, to join in the settlement, has accepted of a sum to do it, and is every moment expected in town for that purpose.

*Luc.* How do you get all this intelligence?

*Phil.* By an art I have, I thank my stars, beyond all the waiting maids in Great Britain; the art of listening, madam, for your ladyship's service.

*Luc.* I shall soon know as much as you do. Leave me, leave me, Phillis; begone! Here, here, I'll turn you out. My mother says I must not converse with my servants, though I must converse with no one else. [*Exit* PHILLIS.] How unhappy are we who are born to great fortunes! No one looks at us with indifference, or acts towards us on the foot of plain-dealing; yet, by all I have been heretofore offered to, or treated for, I have been used with the most agreeable of all abuses, flattery; but now, by this phlegmatic fool, I am used as nothing, or a mere thing: he, forsooth, is too wise, too learned, to have any regard to desires, and I know not what the learned oaf calls sentiments of love and passion!—Here he comes with my mother—'tis much if he looks at me; or, if he does, takes no more notice of me than of any other moveable in the room.

*Enter* MRS SEALAND *and* MR CIMBERTON.

*Mrs Sea.* How do I admire this noble, this learned taste of yours, and the worthy regard you have to our own ancient and honourable house, in consulting a means to keep the blood as pure and regularly descended as may be!

*Cim.* Why, really, madam, the young women of this age are treated with discourses of such a tendency, and their imaginations so bewildered in flesh and blood, that a man of reason can't talk to be understood: they have no ideas of happiness but what are more gross than the gratification of hunger and thirst.

*Luc.* With how much reflection he is a coxcomb! [*Aside.*

*Cim.* And in truth, madam, I have considered it as a most brutal custom, that persons of the first character in the world should go as ordinarily, and with as little shame, to bed, as to dinner with one another. They proceed to the propa-

gation of the species as openly as to the preservation of the individual.

*Luc.* She that willingly goes to bed to thee must have no shame, I'm sure. [*Aside.*

*Mrs Sea.* Oh, cousin Cimberton! cousin Cimberton! how abstracted, how refined is your sense of things! but, indeed, it is too true, there is nothing so ordinary as to say in the best governed families, my master and lady are gone to bed—one does not know but it might have been said of one's self.

[*Hiding her face with her fan.*

*Cim.* Lycurgus, madam, instituted otherwise: among the Lacedemonians, the whole female world was pregnant, but none but the mothers themselves knew by whom; their meetings were secret, and the amorous congress always by stealth; and no such professed doings between the sexes as are tolerated among us under the audacious word—marriage.

*Mrs Sea.* Oh! had I lived in those days, and been a matron of Sparta, one might with less indecency have had ten children according to that modest institution, than one under the confusion of our modern barefaced manner.

*Luc.* And yet, poor woman! she has gone through the whole ceremony; and here I stand a melancholy proof of it. [*Aside.*

*Mrs Sea.* We will talk then of business.—— That girl, walking about the room there, is to be your wife: she has, I confess, no ideas, no sentiments, that speak her born of a thinking mother.

*Cim.* I have observed her; her lively look, free air, and disengaged countenance, speak her very——

*Luc.* Very what?

*Cim.* If you please, madam—to set her a little that way.

*Mrs Sea.* Lucinda, say nothing to him; you are not a match for him: when you are married, you may speak to such a husband when you are spoken to; but I am disposing of you above yourself every way.

*Cim.* Madam, you can't but observe the inconveniencies I expose myself to, in hopes that your ladyship will be the consort of my better part. As for the young woman, she is rather an impediment than a help to a man of letters and speculation. Madam, there is no reflection, no philosophy, can at all times subdue the sensitive life, but the animal shall sometimes carry away the man——Ha! aye, the vermilion of her lips!

*Luc.* Pray don't talk of me thus.

*Cim.* The pretty enough——pant of her bosom!

*Luc.* Sir! madam, don't you hear him?

*Cim.* Her forward chest!

*Luc.* Intolerable!

*Cim.* High health!

*Luc.* The grave, easy, impudence of him!

*Cim.* Proud heart!

*Luc.* Stupid coxcomb!

*Cim.* I say, madam, her impatience, while we are looking at her, throws out all attractions—— her arms——her neck——what a spring in her step!

*Luc.* Don't you run me over thus, you strange, unaccountable——

*Cim.* What an elasticity in her veins and arteries!

*Luc.* I have no veins, no arteries!

*Mrs Sea.* Oh, child! hear him; he talks finely; he's a scholar; he knows what you have.

*Cim.* The speaking invitation of her shape, the gathering of herself up, and the indignation you see in the pretty little thing! Now, I am considering her on this occasion but as one that is to be pregnant———

*Luc.* The familiar, learned, unseasonable puppy! [*Aside.*

*Cim.* And pregnant undoubtedly she will be yearly: I fear I shan't for many years have discretion enough to give her one fallow season.

*Luc.* Monster! there's no bearing it. The hideous sot! There's no enduring it, to be thus surveyed like a steed at sale!

*Cim.* At sale! she's very illiterate; but she's very well limbed, too. Turn her in; I see what she is.

*Mrs Sea.* Go, you creature! I am ashamed of you.

[*Exit* LUCINDA *in a rage.*

*Cim.* No harm done. You know, madam, the better sort of people, as I observed to you, treat by their lawyers of weddings, [*Adjusting himself at the glass.*] and the woman in the bargain, like the mansion-house in the sale of the estate, is thrown in, and what that is, whether good or bad, is not at all considered.

*Mrs Sea.* I grant it, and therefore make no demand for her youth and beauty, and every other accomplishment, as the common world think them, because she is not polite.

*Cim.* I know your exalted understanding, abstracted as it is from vulgar prejudice, will not be offended when I declare to you, madam, I marry to have an heir to my estate, and not to beget a colony or a plantation. This young woman's beauty and constitution will demand provision for a tenth child at least.

*Mrs Sea.* With all that wit and learning, how considerate! what an economist! [*Aside.*] Sir, I cannot make her any other than what she is, or say she is much better than the other young women of this age, or fit for much besides being a mother; but I have given directions for the marriage settlements, and sir Geoffry Cimberton's counsel is to meet ours here at this hour concerning his joining in the deed, which, when executed, makes you capable of settling what is due to Lucinda's fortune. Herself, as I told you, I say nothing of.

*Cim.* No, no, no; indeed, madam, it is not

usual, and I must depend upon my reflection and philosophy not to overstock my family.

*Mrs Sea.* I cannot help her, cousin Cimberton; but she is, for aught I see, as well as the daughter of any body else.

*Cim.* That is very true, madam.

*Enter a Servant, who whispers* MRS SEALAND.

*Mrs Sea.* The lawyers are come, and now we are to hear what they have resolved as to the point, whether it is necessary that sir Geoffry should join in the settlement, as being what they call in the remainder. But, good cousin, you must have patience with them. These lawyers, I am told, are of a different kind; one is what they call a chamber-counsel, the other a pleader: the conveyancer is slow from an imperfection in his speech, and therefore shunned the bar, but extremely passionate, and impatient of contradiction: the other is as warm as he, but has a tongue so voluble, and a head so conceited, he will suffer nobody to speak but himself.

*Cim.* You mean old serjeant Target and counsellor Bramble: I have heard of them.

*Mrs Sea.* The same: shew in the gentlemen.

[*Exit Servant.*

*Re-enter Servant, introducing* MYRTLE *and* TOM, *disguised as* BRAMBLE *and* TARGET.

Gentlemen, this is the party concerned, Mr Cimberton; and I hope you have considered of the matter.

*Tar.* Yes, makam, we have agreed that it must be by indent—dent—dent—dent——

*Bram.* Yes, madam, Mr Serjeant and myself have agreed, as he is pleased to inform you, that it must be an indenture tripartite; and tripartite let it be, for sir Geoffry must needs be a party. Old Cimberton, in the year 1619, says, in that ancient roll in Mr Serjeant's hands, as recourse thereto being had will more at large appear——

*Tar.* Yes, and, by the deeds in your hands, it appears, that——

*Bram.* Mr Serjeant, I beg of you to make no inferences upon what is in our custody, but speak to the titles in your own deeds. I shall not shew that deed, till my client is in town.

*Cim.* You know best your own methods.

*Mrs Sea.* The single question is, Whether the entail is such, that my cousin, sir Geoffry, is necessary in this affair?

*Bram.* Yes, as to the lordship of Tretriplet, but not as to the messuage of Grimgribber.

*Tar.* I say, that Gr—gr—, that Gr—gr—, Grimgribber, Grimgribber is in us; that is to say, the remainder thereof, as well as that of Tr—Tr— Triplet.

*Bram.* You go upon the deed of sir Ralph, made in the middle of the last century, precedent to that in which old Cimberton made over the remainder, and made it pass to the heirs general, by which your client comes in; and I question whether the remainder even of Tretriplet is in him——but we are willing to wave that, and give him a valuable consideration. But we shall not purchase what is in us for ever, as Grimgribber is, at the rate as we guard against the contingent of Mr Cimberton having no son. Then we know sir Geoffrey is the first of the collateral male line in this family——yet——

*Tar.* Sir, Gr——gr——ber is—

*Bram.* I apprehend you very well, and your argument might be of force, and we would be inclined to hear that in all its parts—but, sir, I see very plainly what you are going into—I tell you it is as probable a contingent, that sir Geoffry may die before Mr Cimberton, as that he may outlive him.

*Tar.* Sir, we are not ripe for that yet, but I must say—

*Bram.* Sir, I allow you the whole extent of that argument, but that will go no farther than as to the claimants under old Cimberton. I am of opinion, that, according to the instructions of sir Ralph, he could not dock the entail, and then create a new estate for the heirs in general.

*Tar.* Sir, I have no patience to be told, that when Gr—gr—ber——

*Bram.* I will allow it you, Mr Serjeant; but there must be the words, heirs for ever, to make such an estate as you pretend.

*Cim.* I must be impartial, though you are counsel for my side of the question. Were it not that you are so good as to allow him what he has not said, I should think it very hard you should answer him without hearing him. But, gentlemen, I believe you have both considered this matter, and are firm in your different opinions; 'twere better, therefore, you proceeded according to the particular sense of each of you, and give your thoughts distinctly in writing——And, do you see, sirs, pray let me have a copy of what you say in English.

*Bram.* Why, what is all we have been saying? In English! Oh! but I forgot myself; you're a wit. But, however, to please you, sir, you shall have it in as plain terms as the law will admit of.

*Cim.* But I will have it, sir, without delay.

*Bram.* That, sir, the law will not admit of; the courts are sitting at Westminster, and I am this moment obliged to be at every one of them; and 'twould be wrong if I should not be in the hall to attend one of them at least; the rest would take it ill else:—therefore, I must leave what I have said to Mr Serjeant's consideration, and I will digest his arguments on my part, and you shall hear from me again, sir.

[*Exit* BRAMBLE.

*Tar.* Agreed, agreed.

*Cim.* Mr Bramble is very quick—he parted a little abruptly.

*Tar.* He could not bear my argument; I pinched him to the quick about that Gr—gr—ber.

*Mrs Sea.* I saw that, for he durst not so much as hear you. I shall send to you, Mr Serjeant, as soon as sir Geoffry comes to town; and then, I hope, all may be adjusted.

*Tar.* I shall be at my chambers at my usual hours. [*Exit* TAR.

*Cim.* Madam, if you please, I'll now attend you to the tea-table, where I shall hear from your ladyship reason and good sense, after all this law and gibberish.

*Mrs Sea.* 'Tis a wonderful thing, sir, that men of their profession do not study to talk the substance of what they have to say in the language of the rest of the world; sure they'd find their account in it.

*Cim.* They might perhaps, madam, with people of your good sense; but, with the generality, 'twould never do: the vulgar would have no respect for truth and knowledge, if they were exposed to naked view.

Truth is too simple, of all arts bereaved;
Since the world will—why let it be deceived.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.—BEVIL *junior's lodgings.*

BEVIL *jun. with a letter in his hand, followed by* TOM.

*Tom.* UPON my life, sir, I know nothing of the matter: I never opened my lips to Mr Myrtle about any thing of your letter to madam Lucinda.

*Bev.* What's the fool in such a fright for? I don't suppose you did: what I would know is, whether Mr Myrtle shewed any suspicion, or asked you any questions, to lead you to say casually that you had carried any such letter for me this morning?

*Tom.* Why, sir, if he did ask me any questions, how could I help it?

*Bev.* I don't say you could, oaf! I am not questioning you about him. What did he say to you?

*Tom.* Why, sir, when I came to his chambers to be dressed for the lawyer's part your honour was pleased to put me upon, he asked me if I had been to Mr Sealand's this morning?——So I told him, sir, I often went thither——because, sir, if I had not said that, he might have thought there was something more in my going now, than at another time.

*Bev.* Very well. The fellow's caution, I find, has given him this jealousy. [*Aside.*] Did he ask you no other questions?

*Tom.* Yes, sir—now I remember, as we came away in the hackney-coach from Mr Sealand's, Tom, says he, as I came in to your master this morning, he bade you go for an answer to a letter he had sent; pray, did you bring him any? says he—Ah! says I, sir, your honour is pleased to joke with me; you have a mind to know whether I can keep a secret or no.

*Bev.* And so, by shewing him you could, you told him you had one.

*Tom.* Sir—— [*Confusedly.*

*Bev.* What mean actions does jealousy make a man stoop to! how poorly has he used art with a servant to make him betray his master! Well, and when did he give you this letter for me?

*Tom.* Sir, he writ it before he pulled off his lawyer's gown at his own chambers.

*Bev.* Very well; and what did he say when you brought him my answer to it?

*Tom.* He looked a little out of humour, sir, and said it was very well.

*Bev.* I knew he would be grave upon't—— Wait without.

*Tom.* Hum! 'gad I don't like this: I am afraid we are in the wrong box here—— [*Exit* TOM.

*Bev.* I put on a serenity while my fellow was present, but I have never been more thoroughly disturbed. This hot man, to write me a challenge on supposed artificial dealing, when I professed myself his friend!—I can live contented without glory, but I cannot suffer shame. What's to be done? But first, let me consider Lucinda's letter again. [*Reads.*

'Sir, I hope it is consistent with the laws a 'woman ought to impose upon herself, to ac- 'knowledge, that your manner of declining a 'treaty of marriage in our family, and desiring 'the refusal may come from me, has something 'more engaging in it than the courtship of him, 'who, I fear, will fall to my lot, except your 'friend exerts himself for our common safety 'and happiness. I have reasons for desiring Mr 'Myrtle may not know of this letter till hereaf- 'ter, and am your most obliged humble servant,

LUCINDA SEALAND.'

Well, but the postscript. [*Reads.*

'I won't, upon second thoughts, hide any thing 'from you: but my reason for concealing this is, 'that Mr Myrtle has a jealousy in his temper 'which gives me some terrors; but my esteem 'for him inclines me to hope that only an ill ef- 'fect which sometimes accompanies a tender 'love, and what may be cured by a careful and 'unblameable conduct.'

Thus has this lady made me her friend and confidant, and put herself in a kind under my protection. I cannot tell him immediately the purport of this letter, except I could cure him of the violent and untractable passion of jealousy, and so serve him and her, by disobeying her in the article of secrecy, more than I should by

complying with her directions. But then, this duelling, which custom has imposed upon every man who would live with reputation and honour in the world—how must I preserve myself from imputations there? he'll, forsooth, call it or think it fear, if I explain without fighting—But his letter—I'll read it again——

'Sir, You have used me basely, in correspond-
'ing and carrying on a treaty where you told me
'you were indifferent. I have changed my sword
'since I saw you, which advertisement I thought
'proper to send you against the next meeting be-
'tween you and the injured

'CHARLES MYRTLE.'

*Enter* TOM.

*Tom.* Mr Myrtle, sir: would your honour please to see him?

*Bev.* Why, you stupid creature, let Mr Myrtle wait at my lodgings! Shew him up. [*Exit* TOM.] Well, I am resolved upon my carriage to him—he is in love, and, in every circumstance of life, a little distrustful, which I must allow for. But here he is.

*Enter* TOM, *introducing* MYRTLE.

Sir, I am extremely obliged to you for this honour———But, sir, you, with your very discerning face, leave the room. [*Exit* TOM.] Well, Mr Myrtle, your commands with me?

*Myr.* The time, the place, our long acquaintance, and many other circumstances which affect me on this occasion, oblige me, without farther ceremony or conference, to desire you would not only, as you already have, acknowledge the receipt of my letter, but also comply with the request in it. I must have farther notice taken of my message than these half lines—I have yours—I shall be at home——

*Bev.* Sir, I own I have received a letter from you in a very unusual style; but, as I design every thing in this matter shall be your own action, your own seeking, I shall understand nothing but what you are pleased to confirm face to face; and I have already forgot the contents of your epistle.

*Myr.* This cool manner is very agreeable to the abuse you have already made of my simplicity and frankness; and I see your moderation tends to your own advantage, and not mine; to your own safety, not consideration of your friend.

*Bev.* My own safety, Mr Myrtle!

*Myr.* Your own safety, Mr Bevil.

*Bev.* Look you, Mr Myrtle, there's no disguising that; I understand what you would be at: but, sir, you know I have often dared to disapprove of the decisions a tyrant custom has introduced, to the breach of all laws, both divine and human.

*Myr.* Mr Bevil, Mr Bevil! it would be a good first principle, in those who have so tender a conscience that way, to have as much abhorrence of doing injuries as———.

*Bev.* As what?

*Myr.* As fear of answering for them.

*Bev.* As fear of answering for them! but that apprehension is just or blameable, according to the object of that fear.——I have often told you, in confidence of heart, I abhorred the daring to offend the Author of life, and rushing into his presence. I say, by the very same act, to commit the crime against him, and immediately to urge on to his tribunal.

*Myr.* Mr Bevil, I must tell you, this coolness, this gravity, this shew of conscience, shall never cheat me of my mistress. You have, indeed, the best excuse for life, the hopes of possessing Lucinda; but consider, sir, I have as much reason to be weary of it, if I am to lose her; and my first attempt to recover her, shall be to let her see the dauntless man who is to be her guardian and protector.

*Bev.* Sir, shew me but the least glimpse of argument, that I am authorised, by my own hand, to vindicate any lawless insult of this nature, and I will shew thee, to chastise thee hardly deserves the name of courage. Slight, inconsiderate man! There is, Mr Myrtle, no such terror in quick anger, and you shall, you know not why, be cool, as you have, you know not why, been warm.

*Myr.* Is the woman one loves so little an occasion of anger? You, perhaps, who know not what it is to love, who have your ready, your commodious, your foreign trinket, for your loose hours, and, from your fortune, your specious outward carriage, and other lucky circumstances, as easy a way to the possession of a woman of honour; you know nothing of what it is to be alarmed, to be distracted, with anxiety and terror of losing more than life. Your marriage, happy man! goes on like common business; and, in the interim, you have your rambling captive, your Indian princess, for your soft moments of dalliance; your convenient, your ready, Indiana.

*Bev.* You have touched me beyond the patience of a man, and I'm excusable, in the guard of innocence, or from the infirmity of human nature, which can bear no more, to accept your invitation, and observe your letter.—Sir, I'll attend you.

*Enter* TOM.

*Tom.* Did you call, sir? I thought you did; I heard you speak loud.

*Bev.* Yes; go call a coach.

*Tom.* Sir—Master—Mr Myrtle—Friends——Gentlemen—what d'ye mean? I'm but a servant, or———

*Bev.* Call a coach. [*Exit* TOM.

[*A long pause, walking sullenly by each other.*

[*Aside.*] Shall I, though provoked to the uttermost, recover myself at the entrance of a third

person, and that my servant, too, and not have respect enough to all I have ever been receiving from infancy, the obligation to the best of fathers, to an unhappy virgin, too, whose life depends on mine? [*Shutting the door.*

[*To* MYRTLE.] I have, thank Heaven, time to recollect myself, and shall not, for fear of what such a rash man as you think of me, keep longer unexplained the false appearances under which your infirmity of temper makes you suffer, when, perhaps, too much regard to a false point of honour makes me prolong that suffering.

*Myr.* I am sure Mr Bevil cannot doubt but I had rather have satisfaction from his innocence than his sword.

*Bev.* Why, then, would you ask it first that way?

*Myr.* Consider; you kept your temper yourself no longer than till I spoke to the disadvantage of her you loved.

*Bev.* True. But let me tell you, I have saved you from the most exquisite distress, even though you had succeeded in the dispute. I know you so well, that, I am sure, to have found this letter about a man you had killed, would have been worse than death to yourself. Read it.—When he is thoroughly mortified, and shame has got the better of jealousy, he will deserve to be assisted towards obtaining Lucinda. [*Aside.*

*Myr.* With what a superiority has he turned the injury upon me as the aggressor! I begin to fear I have been too far transported—'A trea-'ty in our family!' is not that saying too much? I shall relapse——But I find (on the postscript) 'something like jealousy'—With what face can I see my benefactor, my advocate, whom I have treated like a betrayer?—Oh, Bevil! with what words shall I————

*Bev.* There needs none; to convince is much more than to conquer.

*Myr.* But can you————

*Bev.* You have overpaid the inquietude you gave me in the change I see in you towards me. Alas! what machines are we! thy face is altered to that of another man, to that of my companion, my friend.

*Myr.* That I could be such a precipitate wretch!

*Bev.* Pray, no more.

*Myr.* Let me reflect, how many friends have died by the hands of friends for want of temper; and you must give me leave to say, again and again, how much I am beholden to that superior spirit you have subdued me with.—What had become of one of us, or perhaps both, had you been as weak as I was, and as incapable of reason?

*Bev.* I congratulate to us both the escape from ourselves, and hope the memory of it will make us dearer friends than ever.

*Myr.* Dear Bevil! your friendly conduct has convinced me, that there is nothing manly but what is conducted by reason, and agreeable to the practice of virtue and justice; and yet, how many have been sacrificed to that idol, the unreasonable opinion of men! Nay, they are so ridiculous in it, that they often use their swords against each other with dissembled anger and real fear:

Betrayed by honour, and compelled by shame,
They hazard being to preserve a name,
Nor dare inquire into the dread mistake,
Till, plunged in sad eternity, they wake!

[*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II.—*St James's Park.*

*Enter* SIR JOHN BEVIL, *and* MR SEALAND.

*Sir J. Bev.* Give me leave, however, Mr Sealand, as we are upon a treaty for uniting our families, to mention only the business of an ancient house.—Genealogy and descent are to be of some consideration in an affair of this sort————

*Mr Sea.* Genealogy and descent! Sir, there has been in our family a very large one. There was Gulfrid the father of Edward, the father of Ptolemy, the father of Crassus, the father of earl Richard, the father of Henry the marquis, the father of duke John————

*Sir J. Bev.* What! do you rave, Mr Sealand? all these great names in your family?

*Mr Sea.* These! yes, sir—I have heard my father name them all, and more.

*Sir J. Bev.* Ay, sir!—and did he say they were all in your family?

*Mr Sea.* Yes, sir: he kept them all—he was the greatest cocker in England——He said duke John won many battles, but never lost him one.

*Sir J. Bev.* Oh, sir, your servant! you are laughing at my laying any stress upon descent. But I must tell you, sir, I never knew any one, but he that wanted that advantage, turn it into ridicule.

*Mr Sea.* And I never knew any, who had many better advantages, put that into his account. But, Sir John, value yourself as you please upon your ancient house, I am to talk freely of every thing you are pleased to put into your bill of rates on this occasion.—Yet, sir, I have made no objections to your son's family—it is his morals that I doubt.

*Sir J. Bev.* Sir, I can't help saying, that what might injure a citizen's credit, may be no stain to a gentleman's honour.

*Mr Sea.* Sir John, the honour of a gentleman is liable to be tainted by as small a matter as the credit of a trader: We are talking of a marriage; and, in such a case, the father of a young woman will not think it an addition to the honour or credit of her lover, that he is a keeper——

*Sir J. Bev.* Mr Sealand, don't take upon you to spoil my son's marriage with any woman else.

*Mr Sea.* Sir John, let him apply to any woman else, and have as many mistresses as he pleases.————

*Sir J. Bev.* My son, sir, is a discreet and sober gentleman.

*Mr Sea.* Sir, I never saw a man that wenched soberly and discreetly that ever left it off—the decency observed in the practice hides, from the sinner even, the iniquity of it: they pursue it, not that their appetites hurry them away, but, I warrant you, because 'tis their opinion they may do it.

*Sir J. Bev.* Were what you suspect a truth—do you design to keep your daughter a virgin, till you find a man unblemished that way?

*Mr Sea.* Sir, as much a cit as you take me for—I know the town and the world—and give me leave to say, that we merchants are a species of gentry that have grown into the world this last century, and are as honourable, and almost as useful, as you landed folks, that have always thought yourselves so much above us; for your trading, forsooth! is extended no farther than a load of hay, or a fat ox—You are pleasant people, indeed! because you are generally bred up to be lazy, therefore, I warrant you, industry is dishonourable!

*Sir J. Bev.* Be not offended, sir; let us go back to our point.

*Mr Sea.* Oh! not at all offended—but I don't love to leave any part of the account unclosed—Look you, sir John, comparisons are odious, and more particularly so on occasions of this kind, when we are projecting races that are to be made out of both sides of the comparisons.

*Sir J. Bev.* But my son, sir, is, in the eye of the world, a gentleman of merit.

*Mr Sea.* I own to you I think him so—But, sir John, I am a man exercised and experienced in chances and disasters; I lost in my earlier years a very fine wife, and, with her, a poor little infant: this makes me perhaps over cautious to preserve the second bounty of Providence to me, and be as careful as I can of this child.—You'll pardon me; my poor girl, sir, is as valuable to me as your boasted son to you.

*Sir J. Bev.* Why, that's one very good reason, Mr Sealand, why I wish my son had her.

*Mr Sea.* There is nothing but this strange lady here, this incognita, that can be objected to him. Here and there a man falls in love with an artful creature, and gives up all the motives of life to that one passion.

*Sir J. Bev.* A man of my son's understanding cannot be supposed to be one of them.

*Mr Sea.* Very wise men have been so enslaved; and when a man marries with one of them upon his hands, whether moved from the demand of the world, or slighter reasons, such a husband soils with his wife for a month perhaps—then good b'w'ye, madam——the show's over——Ah! John Dryden points out such a husband to a hair, where he says,

And while abroad so prodigal the dolt is,
Poor spouse at home as ragged as a colt is.

Now, in plain terms, sir, I shall not care to have my poor girl turned a grazing, and that must be the case when—

*Sir J. Bev.* But pray consider, sir, my son—

*Mr Sea.* Look you, sir, I'll make the matter short. This unknown lady, as I told you, is all the objection I have to him: but one way or other he is or has been certainly engaged to her—I am therefore resolved this very afternoon to visit her: now, from her behaviour or appearance, I shall soon be let into what I may fear or hope for.

*Sir J. Bev.* Sir, I am very confident there can be nothing inquired into, relating to my son, that will not, upon being understood, turn to his advantage.

*Mr Sea.* I hope that as sincerely as you believe it—Sir John Bevil, when I am satisfied in this great point, if your son's conduct answers the character you give him, I shall wish your alliance more than that of any gentleman in Great Britain; and so your servant. [*Exit* SEALAND.

*Sir J. Bev.* He is gone in a way but barely civil; but his great wealth, and the merit of his only child, the heiress of it, are not to be lost for a little peevishness—

*Enter* HUMPHREY.

Oh, Humphrey, you are come in a seasonable minute! I want to talk to thee, and to tell thee, that my head and heart are on the rack about my son.

*Humph.* Sir, you may trust his discretion; I am sure you may.

*Sir J. Bev.* Why, I do believe I may, and yet I'm in a thousand fears when I lay this vast wealth before me. When I consider his prepossessions, either generous to a folly in an honourable love, or abandoned past redemption in a vicious one, and from the one or the other his insensibility to the fairest prospect towards doubling our estate—a father, who knows how useful wealth is, and how necessary even to those who despise it, I say a father, Humphrey, a father cannot bear it.

*Humph.* Be not transported, sir; you will grow incapable of taking any resolution in your perplexity.

*Sir J. Bev.* Yes, as angry as I am with him, I would not have him surprized in any thing.—This mercantile rough man may go grossly into the examination of this matter, and talk to the gentlewoman so as to————

*Humph.* No, I hope not in an abrupt manner.

*Sir J. Bev.* No, I hope not! Why, dost thou know any thing of her, or of him, or of any thing of it, or all of it?

*Humph.* My dear master! I know so much, that I told him this very day, you had reason to be secretly out of humour about her.

*Sir J. Bev.* Did you go so far? Well, what said he to that?

*Humph.* His words were, looking upon me stedfastly, Humphrey, says he, that woman is a woman of honour.

*Sir J. Bev.* How! do you think he is married to her, or intends to marry her?

*Humph.* I can say nothing to the latter—but he says he can marry no one without your consent, while you are living.

*Sir J. Bev.* If he said so much, I know he scorns to break his word with me.

*Humph.* I am sure of that.

*Sir J. Bev.* You are sure of that?—Well, that's some comfort—then I have nothing to do but to see the bottom of this matter during this present ruffle.—Oh, Humphrey———

*Humph.* You are not ill, I hope, sir?

*Sir J. Bev.* Yes, a man is very ill that is in a very ill humour. To be a father, is to be in care for one, whom you oftener disoblige than please by that very care.—Oh! that sons could know the duty to a father before themselves are fathers! —But perhaps you'll say, now, that I am one of the happiest fathers in the world; but I assure you, that of the very happiest is not a condition to be envied.

*Humph.* Sir, your pain arises not from the thing itself, but your particular sense of it.—— You are over fond; nay, give me leave to say, you are unjustly apprehensive from your fondness. My master Bevil never disobliged you, and he will, I know he will, do every thing you ought to expect.

*Sir J. Bev.* He won't take all this money with this girl—For aught I know, he will, forsooth, have so much moderation, as to think he ought not to force his liking for any consideration.

*Humph.* He is to marry her, not you; he is to live with her, not you, sir.

*Sir J. Bev.* I know not what to think; but I know nothing can be more miserable than to be in this doubt—Follow me; I must come to some resolution. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III. BEVIL *junior's lodgings.*

*Enter* TOM *and* PHILLIS.

*Tom.* Well, madam, if you must speak with Mr Myrtle, you shall; he is now with my master in the library.

*Phil.* But you must leave me alone with him, for he can't make me a present, nor I so handsomely take any thing from him, before you; it would not be decent.

*Tom.* It will be very decent indeed for me to retire, and leave my mistress with another man!

*Phil.* He is a gentleman, and will treat one properly.

*Tom.* I believe so—but, however, I won't be far off, and therefore will venture to trust you. I'll call him to you. [*Exit* TOM.

*Phil.* What a deal of pother and sputter here is between my mistress and Mr Myrtle, from mere punctilio! I could, any hour of the day, get her to her lover, and would do it—but she, forsooth, will allow no plot to get him; but if he can come to her, I know she would be glad of it; I must therefore do her an acceptable violence, and surprise her into his arms. I am sure I go by the best rule imaginable: if she were my maid, I should think her the best servant in the world for doing so by me.

*Enter* MYRTLE *and* TOM.

Oh, sir! you and Mr Bevil are fine gentlemen, to let a lady remain under such difficulties as my poor mistress, and not attempt to set her at liberty, or release her from the danger of being instantly married to Cimberton.

*Myr.* Tom has been telling—But, what is to be done?

*Phil.* What is to be done, when a man can't come at his mistress!—why, can't you fire our house, or the next house to us, to make us run out, and you take us?

*Myr.* How, Mrs Phillis———

*Phil.* Ay—let me see that rogue deny to fire a house, make a riot, or any other little thing, when there were no other way to come at me.

*Tom.* I am obliged to you, madam.

*Phil.* Why, don't we hear every day of people's hanging themselves for love, and won't they venture the hazard of being hanged for love?—Oh! were I a man—

*Myr.* What manly thing would you have me undertake, according to your ladyship's notion of a man?

*Phil.* Only be, at once, what one time or other you may be, and wish to be, and must be.

*Myr.* Dear girl! talk plainly to me, and consider I, in my condition, can't be in very good humour—You say, to be at once what I must be?

*Phil.* Ay, ay———I mean no more than to be an old man; I saw you do it very well at the masquerade. In a word, old sir Geoffry Cimberton is every hour expected in town, to join in the deeds and settlements for marrying Mr Cimberton———He is half blind, half lame, half deaf, half dumb; though, as to his passions and desires, he is as warm and ridiculous as when in the heat of youth.

*Tom.* Come, to the business, and don't keep the gentleman in suspense for the pleasure of being courted, as you serve me.

*Phil.* I saw you, at the masquerade, act such a one to perfection: go, and put on that very habit, and come to our house as sir Geoffry: there is not one there but myself knows his person; I was born in the parish where he is lord of the manor; I have seen him often and often at church in the country. Do not hesitate, but come thither; they will think you bring a certain security against Mr Myrtle, and you bring Mr Myrtle. Leave the rest to me; I leave this with

you, and expect———They don't, I told you, know you; they think you out of town, which you had as good be for ever, if you lose this opportunity.——I must be gone; I know I am wanted at home.

*Myr.* My dear Phillis!

[*Catches and kisses her, and gives her money.*

*Phil.* Oh fy! my kisses are not my own; you have committed violence; but I'll carry them to the right owner. [TOM *kisses her.*] Come, see me down stairs, [*To* TOM.] and leave the lover to think of his last game for the prize.

[*Exeunt* TOM *and* PHILLIS.

*Myr.* I think I will instantly attempt this wild expedient——the extravagance of it will make me less suspected, and it will give me opportunity to assert my own right to Lucinda, without whom I cannot live. But I am so mortified at this conduct of mine towards poor Bevil! he must think meanly of me.———I know not how to reassume myself, and be in spirits enough for such an adventure as this———yet I must attempt it, if it be only to be near Lucinda, under her present perplexities; and sure——

The next delight to transport with the fair,
Is to relieve her in her hours of care. [*Exit.*

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—SEALAND'S *house.*

*Enter* PHILLIS, *with lights before* MYRTLE, *disguised like old* SIR GEOFFRY, *supported by* MRS SEALAND, LUCINDA, *and* CIMBERTON.

*Mrs Sea.* Now I have seen you thus far, sir Geoffry, will you excuse me a moment, while I give my necessary orders for your accommodation? [*Exit* MRS SEALAND.

*Myr.* I have not seen you, cousin Cimberton, since you were ten years old; and as it is incumbent on you to keep up your name and family, I shall, upon very reasonable terms, join with you in a settlement to that purpose, though I must tell you, cousin, this is the first merchant that has married into our house.

*Luc.* Deuce on them! am I a merchant because my father is? [*Aside.*

*Myr.* But is he directly a trader at this time?

*Cim.* There's no hiding the disgrace, sir; he trades to all parts of the world.

*Myr.* We never had one of our family before, who descended from persons that did any thing.

*Cim.* Sir, since it is a girl that they have, I am, for the honour of my family, willing to take it in again, and to sink it into our name, and no harm done.

*Myr.* 'Tis prudently and generously resolved—Is this the young thing?

*Cim.* Yes, sir.

*Phil.* Good madam! Don't be out of humour, but let them run to the utmost of their extravagance——Hear them out.

*Myr.* Cannot I see her nearer? My eyes are but weak.

*Phil.* Beside, I am sure the uncle has something worth your notice. I'll take care to get off the young one, and leave you to observe what may be wrought out of the old one, for your good. [*Exit.*

*Cim.* Madam, this old gentleman, your great uncle, desires to be introduced to you, and to see you nearer——Approach, sir.

*Myr.* By your leave, young lady—[*Puts on spectacles.*]—Cousin Cimberton, she has exactly that sort of neck and bosom, for which my sister Gertrude was so much admired in the year sixty-one, before the French dresses first discovered any thing in women below the chin.

*Luc.* What a very odd situation am I in! Though I cannot but be diverted at the extravagance of their humours, equally unsuitable to their age. Chin, quotha! I don't believe my passionate lover there, knows whether I have one or not. Ha, ha!

*Cim.* Madam, I would not willingly offend, but I have a better glass——

[*Pulls out a large one.*

*Enter* PHILLIS *to* CIMBERTON.

*Phil.* Sir, my lady desires to shew the apartment to you, that she intends for sir Geoffrey.

*Cim.* Well, sir, by that time you have sufficiently gazed and sunned yourself in the beauties of my spouse, there, I will wait on you again.

[*Exeunt* CIM. *and* PHIL.

*Myr.* Were it not, madam, that I might be troublesome, there is something of importance, though we are alone, which I would say more safe from being heard.

*Luc.* There is something in this old fellow, methinks, that raises my curiosity.

*Myr.* To be free, madam, I as heartily contemn this kinsman of mine as you do, and am sorry to see so much beauty and merit devoted by your parents to so insensible a possessor.

*Luc.* Surprising! I hope, then, sir, you will not contribute to the wrong you are so generous to pity, whatever may be the interest of your family.

*Myr.* This hand of mine shall never be employed to sign any thing against your good and happiness.

*Luc.* I am sorry, sir, it is not in my power to make you proper acknowledgments; but there is a gentleman in the world, whose gratitude will, I'm sure, be worthy of the favour.

*Myr.* All the thanks I desire, madam, are in your power to give.

*Luc.* Name them, and command them.

*Myr.* Only, madam, that the first time you are alone with your lover, you will with open arms receive him.

*Luc.* As willingly as heart could wish it.

*Myr.* Thus, then, he claims your promise.—Oh, Lucinda!

*Luc.* Oh, a cheat, a cheat, a cheat!

*Myr.* Hush! 'tis I, 'tis I, your lover! Myrtle himself, madam!

*Luc.* Oh, bless me! what rashness and folly to surprize me so! But hush—my mother——

*Enter* MRS SEALAND, CIMBERTON, *and* PHILLIS.

*Mrs Sea.* How now! What's the matter?

*Luc.* Oh, madam! As soon as you left the room, my uncle fell into a sudden fit, and—and—so I cried out for help to support him, and conduct him to his chamber.

*Mrs Sea.* That was kindly done. Alas, sir! how do you find yourself?

*Myr.* Never was taken in so odd a way in my life——Pray lead me——Oh, I was talking here—Pray carry me—to my cousin Cimberton's young lady——

*Mrs Sea.* [*Aside.*]—My cousin Cimberton's young lady! How zealous he is, even in his extremity, for the match! A right Cimberton!

[CIMBERTON *and* LUCINDA *lead him, as one in pain.*

*Cim.* Pox, uncle, you will pull my ear off!

*Luc.* Pray, uncle, you will squeeze me to death!

*Mrs Sea.* No matter, no matter——he knows not what he does. Come, sir, shall I help you out?

*Myr.* By no means: I'll trouble nobody but my young cousins here.

[CIM. *and* LUC. *lead him off.*

*Phil.* But pray, madam, does your ladyship intend that Mr Cimberton shall really marry my young mistress at last? I don't think he likes her.

*Mrs Sea.* That's not material; men of his speculation are above desires. But, be it as it may, now I have given old sir Geoffrey the trouble of coming up to sign and seal, with what countenance can I be off?

*Phil.* As well as with twenty others, madam. It is the glory and honour of a great fortune to live in continual treaties, and still to break off; it looks great, madam.

*Mrs Sea.* True, Phillis——Yet to return our blood again into the Cimbertons, is an honour not to be rejected. But, were not you saying that sir John Bevil's creature, Humphrey, has been with Mr Sealand?

*Phil.* Yes, madam, I overheard them agree, that Mr Sealand should go himself, and visit this unknown lady, that Mr Bevil is so great with; and, if he found nothing there to fright him, that Mr Bevil should still marry my young mistress.

*Mrs Sea.* How! Nay, then, he shall find she is my daughter as well as his——I'll follow him this instant, and take the whole family along with me. The disputed power of disposing of my own daughter, shall be at an end this very night. I'll live no longer in anxiety, for a little hussy, that hurts my appearance, wherever I carry her, and for whose sake I seem to be not at all regarded, and that in the best of my days.

*Phil.* Indeed, madam, if she were married, your ladyship might very well be taken for Mr Sealand's daughter.

*Mrs Sea.* Nay, when the chit has not been with me, I've heard the men say as much—I'll no longer cut off the greatest pleasure of a woman's life (the shining in assemblies) by her forward anticipation of the respect that's due to her superior—She shall down to Cimberton-hall——she shall—she shall.

*Phil.* I hope, madam, I shall stay with your ladyship?

*Mrs Sea.* Thou shalt, Phillis, and I'll place thee then more about me—But order chairs immediately——I'll be gone this minute. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II.—*Charing-Cross.*

*Enter* MR SEALAND *and* HUMPHREY.

*Mr Sea.* I am very glad, Mr Humphrey, that you agree with me, that it is for our common good I should look thoroughly into this matter.

*Humph.* I am, indeed, of that opinion; for there is no artifice, nothing concealed in our family, which ought in justice to be known. I need not desire you, sir, to treat the lady with care and respect.

*Mr Sea.* Mr Humphrey—I shall not be rude, though I design to be a little abrupt, and come into the matter at once, to see how she will bear up on a surprize——

*Humph.* That's the door, sir; I wish you success.—[*While* HUMPHREY *speaks,* SEALAND *consults his table-book.*]—I am less concerned what happens there, because I hear Mr Myrtle is as well lodged as old sir Geoffrey; so, I am willing to let this gentleman employ himself here, to give them time at home; for I am sure it is necessary for the quiet of our family, that Lucinda were disposed of out of it, since Mr Bevil's inclination is so much otherwise engaged. [*Exit* HUMPHREY.

*Mr Sea.* I think this is the door.—[*Knocks.*]—I'll carry this matter with an air of authority, to inquire, though I make an errand to begin discourse. [*Knocks again.*

*Enter a Footboy.*

So, young man, is your lady within?

*Boy.* Alack, sir! I am but a country boy——I don't know whether she is or noa; but an you'll stay a bit, I'll goa and ask the gentlewoman that's with her.

*Mr Sea.* Why, sirrah, though you are a country boy, you can see, cannot you? You know whether she is at home when you see her, don't you?

*Boy.* Nay, nay; I'm not such a country lad, neither, master, to think she is at home because I see her; I have been in town but a month, and I lost one place already for believing my own eyes.

*Mr Sea.* Why, sirrah, have you learnt to lie already?

*Boy.* Ah, master! things that are lies in the country, are not lies at London—I begin to know my business a little better than so—but, an you please to walk in, I'll call a gentlewoman to you that can tell you for certain—She can make bold to ask my lady herself.

*Mr Sea.* Oh, then she is within, I find, though you dare not say so.

*Boy.* Nay, nay, that's neither here nor there; what's matter whether she is within or no, if she has not a mind to see any body?

*Mr Sea.* I cannot tell, sirrah, whether you are arch or simple; but, however, get me a direct answer, and here's a shilling for you.

*Boy.* Will you please to walk in; I'll see what I can do for you.

*Mr Sea.* I see you will be fit for your business in time, child; but I expect to meet with nothing but extraordinaries in such a house.

*Boy.* Such a house, sir! You han't seen it yet. Pray walk in.

*Mr Sea.* Sir, I'll wait upon you.

SCENE II.—INDIANA'S *house.*

*Enter* ISABELLA *and Boy.*

*Isa.* What anxiety do I feel for this poor creature! What will be the end of her? Such a languishing, unreserved passion for a man, that, at last, must certainly leave or ruin her, and, perhaps, both! then, the aggravation of the distress is, that she dare not believe he will—not but I must own, if they are both what they would seem, they are made for one another, as much as Adam and Eve were; for there is no other of their kind, but themselves. So, Daniel, what news with you?

*Boy.* Madam, there's a gentleman below would speak with my lady.

*Isa.* Sirrah, don't you know Mr Bevil yet?

*Boy.* Madam, 'tis not the gentleman who comes every day and asks for you, and won't go in till he knows whether you are with her or no.

*Isa.* Ha! that's a particular I did not know before. Well, be it who it will, let him come up to me.

[*Exit Boy, and re-enters with* MR SEALAND. ISABELLA *looks amazed.*

*Mr Sea.* Madam, I cannot blame your being a little surprised to see a perfect stranger make you a visit, and——

*Isa.* I am indeed surprized——I see he does not know me. [*Aside.*

*Mr Sea.* You are very prettily lodged here, madam; in troth, you seem to have every thing in plenty——a thousand a-year, I warrant you, upon this pretty nest of rooms, and the dainty one within them.

[*Aside, and looking about.*

*Isa.* [*Apart.*] Twenty years, it seems, have less effect in the alteration of a man of thirty, than of a girl of fourteen—he's almost still the same: but, alas! I find by other men as well as himself I am not what I was. As soon as he spoke, I was convinced 'twas he. How shall I contain my surprise and satisfaction! He must not know me yet.

*Mr Sea.* Madam, I hope I don't give you any disturbance? but there is a young lady here, with whom I have a particular business to discourse, and I hope she will admit me to that favour.

*Isa.* Why, sir, have you had any notice concerning her? I wonder who could give it you.

*Mr Sea.* That, madam, is fit only to be communicated to herself.

*Isa.* Well, sir, you shall see her—I find he knows nothing yet, nor shall, for me: I am resolved I will observe this interlude, this sport of nature and fortune. You shall see her presently, sir; for now I am as a mother, and will trust her with you. [*Exit.*

*Mr Sea.* As a mother! right; that's the old phrase for one of these commode ladies, who lend out beauty for hire to young gentlemen that have pressing occasions. But here comes the precious lady herself: in troth, a very sightly woman!

*Enter* INDIANA.

*Ind.* I am told, sir, you have some affair that requires your speaking with me?

*Mr Sea.* Yes, madam. There came to my hands a bill, drawn by Mr Bevil, which is payable to-morrow, and he, in the intercourse of business, sent it to me, who have cash of his, and desired me to send a servant with it; but I have made bold to bring you the money myself.

*Ind.* Sir, was that necessary?

*Mr Sea.* No, madam; but, to be free with you, the fame of your beauty, and the regard which Mr Bevil is a little too well known to have for you, excited my curiosity.

*Ind.* Too well known to have for me! Your sober appearance, sir, which my friend described, made me to expect no rudeness or absurdity at least. Who's there? Sir, if you pay the money to a servant, 'twill be as well.

*Mr Sea.* Pray, madam, be not offended; I came hither on an innocent, nay, a virtuous design; and if you will have patience to hear me, it may be as useful to you, as you are in friend-

ship with Mr Bevil, as to my only daughter, whom I was this day disposing of.

*Ind.* You make me hope, sir, I have mistaken you: I am composed again: be free, say on—what I am afraid to hear. [*Aside.*

*Mr Sea.* I feared, indeed, an unwarranted passion here, but I did not think it was an abuse of so worthy an object, so accomplished a lady, as your sense and mien bespeak—but the youth of our age care not what merit and virtue they bring to shame, so they gratify——

*Ind.* Sir, you are going into very great errors—but as you are pleased to say you see something in me that has changed at least the colour of your suspicions, so has your appearance altered mine, and made me earnestly attentive to what has any way concerned you, to inquire into my affairs and character.

*Mr Sea.* How sensibly—with what an air she talks!

*Ind.* Good sir, be seated—and tell me tenderly—keep all your suspicions concerning me alive, that you may in a proper and prepared way—acquaint me why the care of your daughter obliges a person of your seeming worth and fortune to be thus inquisitive about a wretched, helpless, friendless—[*Weeping.*] But I beg your pardon——though I am an orphan, your child is not, and your concern for her, it seems, has brought you hither——I'll be composed—pray, go on, sir.

*Mr Sea.* How could Mr Bevil be such a monster to injure such a woman?

*Ind.* No, sir, you wrong him; he has not injured me—my support is from his bounty.

*Mr Sea.* Bounty! when gluttons give high prices for delicacies, they are prodigious bountiful!

*Ind.* Still, still you will persist in that error—but my own fears tell me all. You are the gentleman, I suppose, for whose happy daughter he is designed a husband by his good father, and he has, perhaps, consented to the overture, and is to be, perhaps, this night a bridegroom.

*Mr Sea.* I own he was intended such; but, madam, on your account, I am determined to defer my daughter's marriage till I am satisfied, from your own mouth, of what nature are the obligations you are under to him.

*Ind.* His actions, sir, his eyes, have only made me think he designed to make me the partner of his heart. The goodness and gentleness of his demeanour made me misinterpret all; 'twas my own hope, my own passion, that deluded me;—he never made one amorous advance to me; his large heart and bestowing hand have only helped the miserable: nor know I why, but from his mere delight in virtue, that I have been his care, the object on which to indulge and please himself with pouring favours.

*Mr Sea.* Madam, I know not why it is, but I, as well as you, am, methinks, afraid of entering into the matter I came about; but 'tis the same thing as if we had talked ever so distinctly—he never shall have a daughter of mine.

*Ind.* If you say this from what you think of me, you wrong yourself and him. Let not me, miserable though I may be, do injury to my benefactor: no, sir, my treatment ought rather to reconcile you to his virtues. If to bestow without a prospect of return—if to delight in supporting what might, perhaps, be thought an object of desire, with no other view than to be her guard against those who would not be so disinterested—if these actions, sir, can in a parent's eye commend him to a daughter, give yours, sir; give her to my honest, generous Bevil! What have I to do but sigh and weep, to rave, run wild, a lunatic in chains, or, hid in darkness, mutter in distracted starts, and broken accents, my strange, strange story!

*Mr Sea.* Take comfort, madam.

*Ind.* All my comfort must be to expostulate in madness, to relieve with frenzy my despair, and, shrieking, to demand of Fate why, why was I born to such variety of sorrows?

*Mr Sea.* If I have been the least occasion—

*Ind.* No; 'twas Heaven's high will I should be such; to be plundered in my cradle, tossed on the seas, and even there, an infant captive, to lose my mother, hear but of my father—to be adopted, lose my adopter, then plunged again in worse calamities!

*Mr Sea.* An infant captive!

*Ind.* Yet, then, to find the most charming of mankind once more to set me free from what I thought the last distress, to load me with his services, his bounties, and his favours, to support my very life in a way that stole, at the same time, my very soul itself from me.

*Mr Sea.* And has young Bevil been this worthy man?

*Ind.* Yet then, again, this very man to take another, without leaving me the right, the pretence, of easing my fond heart with tears? for oh! I can't reproach him, though the same hand, that raised me to this height, now throws me down the precipice.

*Mr Sea.* Dear lady! oh, yet one moment's patience; my heart grows full with your affliction! but yet there's something in your story that promises relief when you least hope it.

*Ind.* My portion here is bitterness and sorrow.

*Mr Sea.* Do not think so. Pray, answer me; does Bevil know your name and family?

*Ind.* Alas, too well! Oh! could I be any other thing than what I am——I'll tear away all traces of my former self, my little ornaments, the remains of my first state, the hints of what I ought to have been——

[*In her disorder, she throws away her bracelet, which* SEALAND *takes up, and looks earnestly at.*]

*Mr Sea.* Ha! what's this? my eyes are not deceived! it is, it is the same! the very bracelet which I bequeathed my wife at our last mournful parting!

*Ind.* What said you, sir? your wife! Whither does my fancy carry me? what means this new felt motion at my heart? And yet again my fortune but deludes me; for if I err not, sir, your name is Sealand; but my lost father's name was——

*Mr Sea.* Danvers, was it not?

*Ind.* What new amazement! that is, indeed, my family.

*Mr Sea.* Know, then, when my misfortunes drove me to the Indies, for reasons too tedious now to mention, I changed my name of Danvers into Sealand.

*Enter* ISABELLA.

*Isa.* If yet there wants an explanation of your wonder, examine well this face—yours, sir, I well remember—Gaze on, and read in me your sister Isabella.

*Mr Sea.* My sister!

*Isa.* But here's a claim more tender yet—your Indiana, sir, your long-lost daughter.

*Mr Sea.* Oh, my child, my child!

*Ind.* All-gracious Heaven! is it possible! do I embrace my father!

*Mr Sea.* And do I hold thee!—These passions are too strong for utterance.—Rise, rise, my child, and give my tears their way—Oh, my sister! [*Embracing her.*

*Isa.* Now, dearest niece! my groundless fears, my painful cares, no more shall vex thee: if I have wronged thy noble lover with too hard suspicions, my just concern for thee, I hope, will plead my pardon.

*Mr Sea.* Oh! make him then the full amends, and be yourself the messenger of joy: fly this instant—tell him all these wondrous turns of Providence in his favour; tell him I have now a daughter to bestow, which he no longer will decline; that this day he still shall be a bridegroom; nor shall a fortune, the merit which his father seeks, be wanting. Tell him the reward of all his virtues waits on his acceptance. [*Exit* ISABELLA.] My dearest Indiana! [*Turns and embraces her.*

*Ind.* Have I then at last a father's sanction on my love? his bounteous hand to give, and make my heart a present worthy of Bevil's generosity?

*Mr Sea.* Oh, my child! how are our sorrows past o'erpaid by such a meeting! Though I have lost so many years of soft paternal dalliance with thee, yet, in one day to find thee thus, and thus bestow thee, in such perfect happiness, is ample, ample reparation! and yet, again, the merit of thy lover——

*Ind.* Oh, had I spirits left to tell you of his actions! how strongly filial duty has suppressed his love, and how concealment still has doubled all his obligations, the pride, the joy of his alliance, sir, would warm your heart, as he has conquered mine.

*Mr Sea.* How laudable is love when born of virtue! I burn to embrace him.

*Ind.* See, sir, my aunt already has succeeded, and brought him to your wishes.

*Enter* ISABELLA *with* SIR JOHN BEVIL, BEVIL *jun.* MRS SEALAND, CIMBERTON, MYRTLE, *and* LUCINDA.

*Sir J. Bev.* [*Entering.*] Where, where's this scene of wonder!—Mr Sealand, I congratulate, on this occasion, our mutual happiness——Your good sister, sir, has, with the story of your daughter's fortune, filled us with surprise and joy. Now all exceptions are removed; my son has now avowed his love, and turned all former jealousies and doubts to approbation, and I am told your goodness has consented to reward him.

*Mr Sea.* If, sir, a fortune, equal to his father's hopes, can make this object worthy his acceptance.

*Bev.* I hear your mention, sir, of fortune, with pleasure only, as it may prove the means to reconcile the best of fathers to my love; let him be provident, but let me be happy.—My ever destined, my acknowledged wife! [*Embracing* INDIANA.

*Ind.* Wife!—oh! my ever-loved, my lord, my master!

*Sir J. Bev.* I congratulate myself, as well as you, that I have a son who could, under such disadvantages, discover your great merit.

*Mr Sea.* Oh, sir John, how vain, how weak is human prudence! what care, what foresight, what imagination could contrive such blest events to make our children happy, as Providence, in one short hour, has laid before us?

*Cim.* [*To* MRS SEALAND.] I am afraid, madam, Mr Sealand is a little too busy for our affair; if you please we'll take another opportunity.

*Mrs Sea.* Let us have patience, sir.

*Cim.* But we make sir Geoffry wait, madam.

*Myr.* Oh, sir, I'm not in haste.

[*During this,* BEV. *jun. presents* LUCINDA *to* INDIANA.]

*Mr Sea.* But here, here's our general benefactor. Excellent young man! that could be at once a lover to her beauty, and a parent to her virtue!

*Bev. jun.* If you think that an obligation, sir, give me leave to overpay myself in the only instance that can now add to my felicity, by begging you to bestow this lady on Mr Myrtle.

*Mr Sea.* She is his without reserve; I beg he may be sent for. Mr Cimberton, notwithstanding you never had my consent, yet there is, since I saw you, another objection to your marriage with my daughter.

*Cim.* I hope, sir, your lady has concealed nothing from me?

*Mr Sea.* Troth, sir, nothing but what was concealed from myself; another daughter, who has an undoubted title to half my estate.

*Cim.* How, Mr Sealand! why then, if half Mrs Lucinda's fortune is gone, you can't say that any of my estate is settled upon her; I was in treaty for the whole: but if that's not to be come at, to be sure there can be no bargain. Sir—I have nothing to do but to take my leave of your good lady my cousin, and beg pardon for the trouble I have given this old gentleman.

*Myr.* That you have, Mr Cimberton, with all my heart. [*Discovers himself.*

*Omnes.* Mr Myrtle!

*Myr.* And I beg pardon of the whole company, that I assumed the person of sir Geoffry only to be present at the danger of this lady's being disposed of, and, in her utmost exigence, to assert my right to her, which, if her parents will ratify, as they once favoured my pretensions, no abatement of fortune shall lessen her value to me.

*Luc.* Generous man!

*Mr Sea.* If, sir, you can overlook the injury of being in treaty with one who has as meanly left her, as you have generously asserted your right in her, she is yours.

*Luc.* Mr Myrtle, though you have ever had my heart, yet now I find I love you more, because I deserve you less.

*Mrs Sea.* Well, however, I'm glad the girl's disposed of any way. [*Aside.*

*Bev. jun.* Myrtle! no longer rivals now, but brothers.

*Myr.* Dear Bevil! you are born to triumph over me; but now our competition ceases: I rejoice in the pre-eminence of your virtue, and your alliance adds charms to Lucinda.

*Sir J. Bev.* Now, ladies and gentlemen, you have set the world a fair example; your happiness is owing to your constancy and merit, and the several difficulties you have struggled with evidently shew—

Whate'er the generous mind itself denies,
The secret care of Providence supplies.

[*Exeunt.*

THE

# PROVOKED HUSBAND;

OR,

# A JOURNEY TO LONDON.

BY

*VANBRUGH & CIBBER.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### MEN.

LORD TOWNLY, *of a regular life.*
MR MANLY, *an admirer of* LADY GRACE.
SIR FRANCIS WRONGHEAD, *a country gentleman.*
SQUIRE RICHARD, *his son, a mere whelp.*
COUNT BASSET, *a gamester.*
JOHN MOODY, *servant to* SIR FRANCIS, *an honest clown.*

### WOMEN.

LADY TOWNLY, *immoderate in her pursuit of pleasures.*
LADY GRACE, *sister to* LORD TOWNLY, *of exemplary virtue.*
LADY WRONGHEAD, *wife to* SIR FRANCIS, *inclined to be a fine lady.*
MISS JENNY, *her daughter, pert and forward.*
MRS MOTHERLY, *one that lets lodgings.*
MYRTILLA, *her niece, seduced by the count.*
MRS TRUSTY, LADY TOWNLY'S *woman.*

*Scene—London.*

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—LORD TOWNLY'S *apartment.*

LORD TOWNLY, *solus.*

WHY did I marry?——Was it not evident, my plain, rational scheme of life was impracticable, with a woman of so different a way of thinking?—Is there one article of it that she has not broke in upon?——Yes—let me do her justice—her reputation———That I have no reason to believe is in question—But, then, how long her profligate course of pleasures may make her able to keep it—is a shocking question! and her presumption while she keeps it—insupportable! for, on the pride of that single virtue, she seems to lay it down as a fundamental point, that the free indulgence of every other vice this fertile town affords, is the birth-right prerogative of a woman of quality———Amazing! that a creature, so warm in the pursuit of her pleasures, should never cast one thought towards her happiness——Thus, while she admits of no lover, she thinks it a greater merit still, in her chastity, not to care for her husband; and, while she herself is solacing in one continual round of cards and good company, he, poor wretch! is left at large, to take care of his own contentment——'Tis time,

indeed, some care were taken; and speedily there shall be——Yet, let me not be rash——Perhaps this disappointment of my heart may make me too impatient; and some tempers, when reproached, grow more untractable——Here she comes—Let me be calm awhile.

*Enter* LADY TOWNLY.

Going out so soon after dinner, madam?

*Lady Town.* Lard, my lord! what can I possibly do at home?

*Lord Town.* What does my sister, Lady Grace, do at home?

*Lady Town.* Why, that is to me amazing! Have you ever any pleasure at home?

*Lord Town.* It might be in your power, madam, I confess, to make it a little more comfortable to me.

*Lady Town.* Comfortable! And so, my good lord, you would really have a woman of my rank and spirit stay at home to comfort her husband! Lord! what notions of life some men have!

*Lord Town.* Don't you think, madam, some ladies' notions are full as extravagant?

*Lady Town.* Yes, my lord; when the tame doves live cooped within the pen of your precepts, I do think them prodigious indeed.

*Lord Town.* And when they fly wild about this town, madam, pray, what must the world think of them, then?

*Lady Town.* Oh! this world is not so ill-bred as to quarrel with any woman for liking it!

*Lord Town.* Nor am I, madam, a husband so well-bred, as to bear my wife's being so fond of it: in short, the life you lead, madam———

*Lady Town.* Is to me the pleasantest life in the world.

*Lord Town.* I should not dispute your taste, madam, if a woman had a right to please nobody but herself.

*Lady Town.* Why! whom would you have her please?

*Lord Town.* Sometimes her husband.

*Lady Town.* And don't you think a husband under the same obligation?

*Lord Town.* Certainly.

*Lady Town.* Why, then, we are agreed, my lord——For, if I never go abroad till I am weary of being at home—which you know is the case—is it not equally reasonable, not to come home till one is weary of being abroad?

*Lord. Town.* If this be your rule of life, madam, 'tis time to ask you one serious question.

*Lady Town.* Don't let it be long a coming, then——for I am in haste.

*Lord Town.* Madam, when I am serious, I expect a serious answer.

*Lady Town.* Before I know the question?

*Lord Town.* Psha!—Have I power, madam, to make you serious by entreaty?

*Lady Town.* You have.

*Lord Town.* And you promise to answer me sincerely?

*Lady Town.* Sincerely.

*Lord Town.* Now, then, recollect your thoughts, and tell me seriously why you married me?

*Lady Town.* You insist upon truth, you say?

*Lord Town.* I think I have a right to it.

*Lady Town.* Why then, my lord, to give you, at once, a proof of my obedience and sincerity—I think—I married—to take off that restraint that lay upon my pleasures while I was a single woman.

*Lord Town.* How, madam! is any woman under less restraint after marriage than before it?

*Lady Town.* Oh, my lord, my lord! they are different creatures! Wives have infinite liberties in life, that would be terrible in an unmarried woman to take.

*Lord Town.* Name one.

*Lady Town.* Fifty, if you please—To begin, then—in the morning—A married woman may have men at her toilet; invite them to dinner; appoint them a party in the stage-box at the play; engross the conversation there; call them by their christian names; talk louder than the players; from thence jaunt into the city; take a frolicsome supper at an India-House; perhaps, in her *gaieté de cœur*, toast a pretty fellow; then clatter again to this end of the town; break, with the morning, into an assembly; crowd to the hazard-table; throw a familiar *levant* upon some sharp, lurching man of quality, and, if he demands his money, turn it off with a loud laugh, and cry———you'll owe it him, to vex him, ha, ha!

*Lord Town.* Prodigious! [*Aside.*

*Lady Town.* These, now, my lord, are some few of the many modish amusements that distinguish the privilege of a wife, from that of a single woman.

*Lord Town.* Death, madam! what law has made these liberties less scandalous in a wife, than in an unmarried woman?

*Lady Town.* Why the strongest law in the world, custom—custom, time out of mind, my lord.

*Lord Town.* Custom, madam, is the law of fools; but it shall never govern me.

*Lady Town.* Nay, then, my lord, 'tis time for me to observe the laws of prudence.

*Lord Town.* I wish I could see an instance of it.

*Lady Town.* You shall have one this moment, my lord; for I think, when a man begins to lose his temper at home, if a woman has any prudence, why—she'll go abroad 'till he comes to himself again. [*Going.*

*Lord Town.* Hold, madam——I am amazed you are not more uneasy at the life you lead. You don't want sense, and yet seem void of all

humanity; for, with a blush I say it, I think I have not wanted love.

*Lady Town.* Oh, don't say that, my lord, if you suppose I have my senses!

*Lord Town.* What is it I have done to you? What can you complain of?

*Lady Town.* Oh, nothing in the least! 'Tis true, you have heard me say, I have owed my lord Lurcher an hundred pounds these three weeks———but what then——a husband is not liable to his wife's debts of honour, you know—and if a silly woman will be uneasy about money she can't be sued for, what's that to him? As long as he loves her, to be sure, she can have nothing to complain of.

*Lord Town.* By Heaven, if my whole fortune, thrown into your lap, could make you delight in the cheerful duties of a wife, I should think myself a gainer by the purchase.

*Lady Town.* That is, my lord, I might receive your whole estate, provided you were sure I would not spend a shilling of it.

*Lord Town.* No, madam; were I master of your heart, your pleasures would be mine; but, different as they are, I'll feed even your follies, to deserve it——Perhaps you may have some other trifling debts of honour abroad, that keep you out of humour at home——at least, it shall not be my fault, if I have not more of your company—There, there's a bill of five hundred———and now, madam———

*Lady Town.* And now, my lord, down to the ground I thank you———Now I am convinced, were I weak enough to love this man, I should never get a single guinea from him. [*Aside.*

*Lord Town.* If it be no offence, madam———

*Lady Town.* Say what you please, my lord; I am in that harmony of spirits, it is impossible to put me out of humour.

*Lord Town.* How long, in reason then, do you think that sum ought to last you?

*Lady Town.* Oh, my dear, dear lord! now you have spoiled all again: how is it possible I should answer for an event that so utterly depends upon fortune? But, to shew you that I am more inclined to get money than to throw it away———I have a strong prepossession, that with this five hundred, I shall win five thousand.

*Lord. Town.* Madam, if you were to win ten thousand, it would be no satisfaction to me.

*Lady Town.* Oh, the churl! ten thousand! what! not so much as wish I might win ten thousand!———Ten thousand! Oh, the charming sum! what infinite pretty things might a woman of spirit do with ten thousand guineas! O' my conscience, if she were a woman of true spirit, she—she might lose them all again.

*Lord Town.* And I had rather it should be so, madam, provided I could be sure that were the last you would lose.

*Lady Town.* Well, my lord, to let you see I design to play all the good house-wife I can; I am now going to a party at quadrille, only to piddle with a little of it, at poor two guineas a fish, with the dutchess of Quiteright. [*Exit.*

*Lord Town.* Insensible creature! neither reproaches or indulgence, kindness or severity, can wake her to the least reflection! Continual licence has lulled her into such a lethargy of care, that she speaks of her excesses with the same easy confidence, as if they were so many virtues. What a turn has her head taken!———But how to cure it———I am afraid the physic must be strong that reaches her———Lenitives, I see, are to no purpose———take my friend's opinion———Manly will speak freely———my sister with tenderness to both sides. They know my case—I'll talk with them.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* Mr Manly, my lord, has sent to know if your lordship was at home.

*Lord Town.* They did not deny me?

*Ser.* No, my lord.

*Lord Town.* Very well; step up to my sister, and say, I desire to speak with her.

*Ser.* Lady Grace is here, my lord.

[*Exit Servant.*

*Enter* LADY GRACE.

*Lord Town.* So, lady fair; what pretty weapon have you been killing your time with?

*Lady Grace.* A huge folio, that has almost killed me———I think I have read half my eyes out.

*Lord Town.* Oh! you should not pore so much just after dinner, child.

*Lady Grace.* That's true; but any body's thoughts are better always than one's own, you know.

*Lord Town.* Who's there?

*Enter Servant.*

Leave word at the door, I am at home to nobody but Mr Manly. [*Exit Ser.*

*Lady Grace.* And why is he excepted, pray, my lord?

*Lord Town.* I hope, madam, you have no objection to his company?

*Lady Grace.* Your particular orders, upon my being here, look, indeed, as if you thought I had not.

*Lord Town.* And your ladyship's inquiry into the reason of those orders, shews, at least, it was not a matter indifferent to you.

*Lady Grace.* Lord, you make the oddest constructions, brother!

*Lord Town.* Look you, my grave lady Grace—in one serious word—I wish you had him.

*Lady Grace.* I can't help that.

*Lord Town.* Ha! you can't help it; ha, ha! The flat simplicity of that reply was admirable!

*Lady Grace.* Pooh, you teaze one, brother!

*Lord Town.* Come, I beg pardon, child—— this is not a point, I grant you, to trifle upon; therefore, I hope you'll give me leave to be serious.

*Lady Grace.* If you desire it, brother; though, upon my word, as to Mr Manly's having any serious thoughts of me—I know nothing of it.

*Lord Town.* Well——there's nothing wrong in your making a doubt of it——But, in short, I find, by his conversation of late, that he has been looking round the world for a wife; and if you were to look round the world for a husband, he is the first man I would give to you.

*Lady Grace.* Then, whenever he makes me any offer, brother, I will certainly tell you of it.

*Lord Town.* Oh! that's the last thing he'll do: he'll never make you an offer, till he's pretty sure it won't be refused.

*Lady Grace.* Now you make me curious. Pray, did he ever make any offer of that kind to you?

*Lord Town.* Not directly; but that imports nothing: he is a man too well acquainted with the female world to be brought into a high opinion of any one woman, without some well-examined proof of her merit; yet I have reason to believe, that your good sense, your turn of mind, and your way of life, have brought him to so favourable a one of you, that a few days will reduce him to talk plainly to me; which, as yet, (notwithstanding our friendship) I have neither declined nor encouraged him to.

*Lady Grace.* I am mighty glad we are so near in our way of thinking; for, to tell you the truth, he is much upon the same terms with me: you know he has a satirical turn; but never lashes any folly, without giving due encomiums to its opposite virtue: and, upon such occasions, he is sometimes particular, in turning his compliments upon me, which I don't receive with any reserve, lest he should imagine I take them to myself.

*Lord Town.* You are right, child: when a man of merit makes his addresses, good sense may give him an answer, without scorn or coquetry.

*Lady Grace.* Hush! he's here——

*Enter* MR MANLY.

*Man.* My lord, your most obedient.

*Lord Town.* Dear Manly, yours—I was thinking to send to you.

*Man.* Then, I am glad I am here, my lord—Lady Grace, I kiss your hands—What, only you two! How many visits may a man make, before he falls into such unfashionable company? A brother and sister soberly sitting at home, when the whole town is a gadding! I question if there is so particular a *tête à tête* again, in the whole parish of St James's.

*Lady Grace.* Fy, fy, Mr Manly! how censorious you are!

*Man.* I had not made the reflection, madam, but that I saw you an exception to it—Where's my lady?

*Lord Town.* That, I believe, is impossible to guess.

*Man.* Then I won't try, my lord—

*Lord Town.* But, 'tis probable, I may hear of her, by the time I have been four or five hours in bed.

*Man.* Now, if that were my case—I believe I—But, I beg pardon, my lord.

*Lord Town.* Indeed, sir, you shall not: you will oblige me if you speak out; for it was upon this head I wanted to see you.

*Man.* Why then, my lord, since you oblige me to proceed—if that were my case—I believe I should certainly sleep in another house.

*Lady Grace.* How do you mean?

*Man.* Only a compliment, madam.

*Lady Grace.* A compliment!

*Man.* Yes, madam, in rather turning myself out of doors than her.

*Lady Grace.* Don't you think that would be going too far?

*Man.* I don't know but it might, madam; for, in strict justice, I think she ought rather to go than I.

*Lady Grace.* This is new doctrine, Mr Manly.

*Man.* As old, madam, as love, honour, and obey. When a woman will stop at nothing that's wrong, why should a man balance any thing that's right?

*Lady Grace.* Bless me! but this is fomenting things—

*Man.* Fomentations, madam, are sometimes necessary to dispel tumours: though I do not directly advise my lord to this——This is only what, upon the same provocation, I would do myself.

*Lady Grace.* Ay, ay, you would do! Bachelors wives, indeed, are finely governed.

*Man.* If the married men's were as well—I am apt to think we should not see so many mutual plagues taking the air in separate coaches.

*Lady Grace.* Well, but suppose it your own case; would you part with your wife, because she now and then stays out in the best company?

*Lord Town.* Well said, lady Grace! Come, stand up for the privilege of your sex. This is like to be a warm debate. I shall edify.

*Man.* Madam, I think a wife, after midnight, has no occasion to be in better company than her husband's; and that frequent unreasonable hours make the best company—the worst she can fall into.

*Lady Grace.* But if people of condition are to keep company with one another, how is it possible to be done, unless one conforms to their hours?

*Man.* I can't find that any woman's good breeding obliges her to conform to other people's vices.

*Lord Town.* I doubt, child, here we are got a little on the wrong side of the question.

*Lady Grace.* Why so, my lord? I can't think the case so bad as Mr Manly states it—People

of quality are not tied down to the rules of those who have their fortunes to make.

*Man.* No people, madam, are above being tied down to some rules, that have fortunes to lose.

*Lady Grace.* Pooh! I'm sure, if you were to take my side of the argument, you would be able to say something more for it.

*Lord Town.* Well, what say you to that, Manly?

*Man.* Why, troth, my lord, I have something to say.

*Lady Grace.* Ay! that I should be glad to hear, now.

*Lord Town.* Out with it.

*Man.* Then, in one word, this, my lord, I have often thought, that the misconduct of my lady has, in a great measure, been owing to your lordship's treatment of her.

*Lady Grace.* Bless me!

*Lord Town.* My treatment!

*Man.* Ay, my lord; you so idolized her before marriage, that you even indulged her like a mistress after it: in short, you continued the lover, when you should have taken up the husband.

*Lady Grace.* Oh, frightful! this is worse than t'other; can a husband love a wife too well?

*Man.* As easy, madam, as a wife may love her husband too little.

*Lord Town.* So; you two are never like to agree, I find.

*Lady Grace.* Don't be positive, brother——I am afraid we are both of a mind already. [*Aside.*] And do you, at this rate, ever hope to be married, Mr Manly?

*Man.* Never, madam, till I can meet with a woman that likes my doctrine.

*Lady Grace.* 'Tis pity but your mistress should hear it.

*Man.* Pity me, madam, when I marry the woman that won't hear it.

*Lady Grace.* I think, at least, he can't say that's me. [*Aside.*

*Man.* And so, my lord, by giving her more power than was needful, she has none where she wants it; having such entire possession of you, she is not mistress of herself. And, mercy on us! how many fine women's heads have been turned upon the same occasion!

*Lord Town.* Oh, Manly, 'tis too true! there's the source of my disquiet; she knows, and has abused her power; nay, I am still so weak, (with shame I speak it) 'tis not an hour ago, that, in the midst of my impatience—I gave her another bill for five hundred to throw away.

*Man.* Well, my lord, to let you see I am sometimes upon the side of good nature, I won't absolutely blame you; for the greater your indulgence, the more you have to reproach her with.

*Lady Grace.* Ay, Mr Manly, here now, I begin to come in with you. Who knows, my lord, but you may have a good account of your kindness?

*Man.* That, I am afraid, we had best not depend upon. But, since you have had so much patience, my lord, even go on with it a day or two more; and, upon her ladyship's next sally, be a little rounder in your expostulations; if that don't work——drop her some cool hints of a determined reformation, and leave her—to breakfast upon them.

*Lord Town.* You are perfectly right. How valuable is a friend, in our anxiety!

*Man.* Therefore, to divert that, my lord, I beg, for the present, we may call another cause.

*Lady Grace.* Ay, for goodness' sake, let us have done with this.

*Lord Town.* With all my heart.

*Lady Grace.* Have you no news abroad, Mr Manly?

*Man. A propos*—I have some, madam; and I believe, my lord, as extraordinary in its kind—

*Lord Town.* Pray, let us have it.

*Man* Do you know that your country-neighbour, and my wise kinsman, sir Francis Wrong-head, is coming to town with his whole family?

*Lord Town.* The fool! What can be his business here?

*Man.* Oh! of the last importance, I'll assure you——No less than the business of the nation.

*Lord Town.* Explain.

*Man.* He has carried his election—against sir John Worthland.

*Lord Town.* The deuce! What! for—for—

*Man.* The famous borough of Guzzledown.

*Lord Town.* A proper representative, indeed!

*Lady Grace.* Pray, Mr Manly, don't I know him?

*Man.* You have dined with him, madam, when I was last down with my lord, at Bellmont.

*Lady Grace.* Was not that he that got a little merry before dinner, and overset the tea-table in making his compliments to my lady?

*Man.* The same.

*Lady Grace.* Pray, what are his circumstances? I know but very little of him.

*Man.* Then he is worth your knowing, I can tell you, madam. His estate, if clear, I believe, might be a good two thousand pounds a-year; though as it was left him, saddled with two jointures, and two weighty mortgages upon it, there is no saying what it is—But that he might be sure never to mend it, he married a profuse young hussy, for love, without a penny of money. Thus, having, like his brave ancestors, provided heirs for the family (for his dove breeds like a tame pigeon), he now finds children and interest-money making such a bawling about his ears, that, at last, he has taken the friendly advice of his kinsman, the good lord Danglecourt, to run his estate two thousand pounds more in debt, to put the whole management of what is left into Paul Pillage's hands, that he may be at leisure himself to retrieve his affairs, by being a parliament man.

*Lord Town.* A most admirable scheme, indeed!

*Man.* And, with this prolific prospect, he is now upon his journey to London——

*Lord Town.* What can it end in?

*Man.* Pooh! A journey into the country again.

*Lord Town.* Do you think he'll stir, till his money is gone; or, at least, till the session is over?

*Man.* If my intelligence is right, my lord, he won't sit long enough to give his vote for a turnpike.

*Lord Town.* How so?

*Man.* Oh, a bitter business; he had scarce a vote in the whole town, beside the returning officer. Sir John will certainly have it at the bar of the house, and send him about his business again.

*Lord Town.* Then he has made a fine business of it, indeed.

*Man.* Which, as far as my little interest will go, shall be done in as few days as possible.

*Lady Grace.* But why would you ruin the poor gentleman's fortune, Mr Manly?

*Man.* No, madam; I would only spoil his project, to save his fortune.

*Lady Grace.* How are you concerned enough to do either?

*Man.* Why, I have some obligations to the family, madam: I enjoy, at this time, a pretty estate, which sir Francis was heir-at-law to: but, by his being a booby, the last will of an obstinate old uncle gave it to me.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* [*To* MANLY.]—Sir, here is one of your servants from your house, desires to speak with you.

*Man.* Will you give him leave to come in, my lord?

*Lord Town.* Sir, the ceremony's of your own making.

*Enter* MANLY'S *Servant.*

*Man.* Well, James, what's the matter?

*James.* Sir, here is John Moody just come to town: he says sir Francis, and all the family, will be here to-night, and is in a great hurry to speak with you.

*Man.* Where is he?

*James.* At our house, sir; he has been gaping and stumping about the streets in his dirty boots, and asking every one he meets, if they can tell him where he may have a good lodging for a parliament man, till he can hire a handsome house, fit for all his family, for the winter.

*Man.* I am afraid, my lord, I must wait upon Mr Moody.

*Lord Town.* Prithee, let us have him here; he will divert us.

*Man.* Oh, my lord, he's such a cub! Not but he's so near common sense, that he passes for wit in the family.

*Lady Grace.* I beg, of all things, we may have him: I am in love with nature, let her dress be never so homely.

*Man.* Then desire him to come hither, James. [*Exit* JAMES.

*Lady Grace.* Pray, what may be Mr Moody's post?

*Man.* Oh! his maitre d'hotel, his butler, his bailiff, his hind, his huntsman, and sometimes—his companion.

*Lord Town.* It runs in my head, that the moment this knight has set him down in the house, he will get up, to give them the earliest proof of what importance he is to the public, in his own country.

*Man.* Yes; and, when they have heard him, he will find, that his utmost importance stands valued at——sometimes being invited to dinner.

*Lady Grace.* And her ladyship, I suppose, will make as considerable a figure in her sphere, too?

*Man.* That you may depend upon: for (if I don't mistake) she has ten times more of the jade in her, than she yet knows of; and she will so improve in this rich soil in a month, that she will visit all the ladies that will let her into their houses; and run in debt to all the shop-keepers that will let her into their books: in short, before her important spouse has made five pounds by his eloquence at Westminster, she will have lost five hundred at dice and quadrille, in the parish of St James's.

*Lord Town.* So that, by that time he is declared unduly elected, a swarm of duns will be ready for their money; and his worship—will be ready for a gaol.

*Man.* Yes, yes; that, I reckon, will close the account of this hopeful journey to London—— But see, here comes the fore-horse of the team.

*Enter* JOHN MOODY.

Oh, honest John!

*J. Moody.* Ad's waunds and heart, Measter Manly! I'm glad I ha' fun ye. Lawd, lawd, give me a buss! Why, that's friendly, naw.—— Flesh! I thought we would never ha' got hither. Well, and how do you do, Measter?—Good lack! I beg pardon for my bawldness—I did not see 'at his honour was here.

*Lord Town.* Mr Moody, your servant: I am glad to see you in London: I hope all the good family is well.

*J. Moody.* Thanks be praised, your honour, they are all in pretty good heart; tho'f we have had a power of crosses upo' the road.

*Lady Grace.* I hope my lady has had no hurt, Mr Moody?

*J. Moody.* Noa, and please your ladyship, she was never in better humour: there's money enough stirring now.

*Man.* What has been the matter, John?

*J. Moody.* Why, we came up in such a hurry, you mun think, that our tackle was not so tight as it should be.

*Man.* Come, tell us all——Pray, how do they travel?

*J. Moody.* Why, i' the awld coach, measter; and, 'cause my lady loves to do things handsome, to be sure, she would have a couple of cart-horses clapt to the four old geldings, that neighbours might see she went up to London in her coach and six; and so Giles Joulter, the ploughman, rides postillion.

*Man.* Very well! the journey sets out as it should do.—[*Aside.*]—What, do they bring all the children with them, too?

*J. Moody.* Noa, noa; only the younk 'squoire and Miss Jenny. The other foive are all out at board, at half-a-crown a-head a-week, with John Growse, at Smoke-dunghill farm.

*Man.* Good again! a right English academy for young children!

*J. Moody.* Anan, sir?

[*Not understanding him.*

*Lady Grace.* Poor souls! What will become of them?

*J. Moody.* Nay, nay; for that matter, madam, they are in very good hands: Joan loves 'um as tho'f they were all her own: for she was wet-nurse to every mother's babe of 'um—Ay, ay; they'll ne'er want for a belly-full there!

*Lady Grace.* What simplicity!

*Man.* The Lud 'a mercy upon all good folks! What work will these people make!

[*Holding up his hands.*

*Lord Town.* And when do you expect them here, John?

*J. Moody.* Why, we were in hopes to ha' come yesterday, an' it had no' been that th' awld Wezlebelly horse tired: and then we were so cruelly loaden, that the two fore-wheels came crash down at once, in Waggon-rut-lane, and there we lost four horses 'fore we could set things to right again.

*Man.* So, they bring all the baggage with the coach, then?

*J. Moody.* Ay, ay; and good store on it there is——Why, my lady's geer alone were as much as filled four portmantel trunks, beside the great deal box that heavy Ralph and the monkey sit upon behind.

*Lord Town.*
*Lady Grace.* } Ha, ha, ha!
*Man.*

*Lady Grace.* Well, Mr Moody, and pray how many are they within the coach?

*J. Moody.* Why, there's my lady, and his worship; and the younk 'squoire, and Miss Jenny, and the fat lap-dog, and my lady's maid, Mrs Handy, and Doll Tripe, the cook, that's all——Only Doll puked a little with riding backward; so, they hoisted her into the coach-box, and then her stomach was easy.

*Lady Grace.* Oh, I see them! I see them go by me. Ha, ha! [*Laughing.*

*J. Moody.* Then you mun think, measter, there was some stowage for the belly, as well as the back, too; children are apt to be famished upon the road; so we had such cargoes of plum-cake, and baskets of tongues, and biscuits, and cheese, and cold boiled beef——And, then, in case of sickness, bottles of cherry-brandy, plague water, sack, tent, and strong beer so plenty, as made the awld coach crack again. Mercy upon them! and send them all well to town, I say!

*Man.* Aye, and well out of it again, John.

*J. Moody.* Ods bud, measter! you're a wise man; and for that matter, so am I—Whoam's whoam, I say: I am sure we ha' got but little good e'er sin' we turned our backs on't. Nothing but mischief! Some devil's trick or other plagued us all aw the day lang. Crack, goes one thing! bawnce, goes another! Woa! says Roger—Then, sowse! we are all set fast in a slough. Whaw, cries miss! Scream, go the maids! and bawl, just as thof' they were stuck. And so, mercy on us! this was the trade from morning to night. But my lady was in such a murrain haste to be here, that set out she would, thof' I told her it was Childermas day.

*Man.* These ladies, these ladies, John——

*J. Moody.* Ay, measter! I ha' seen a little of them: and I find, that the best——when she's mended, won't ha' much goodness to spare.

*Lord Town.* Well said, John! Ha, ha!

*Man.* I hope, at least, you and your good woman agree still?

*J. Moody.* Ay, ay; much of a muchness.——Bridget sticks to me: though, as for her goodness——why, she was coming to London, too—But hauld a bit! Noa, noa, says I; there may be mischief enough done without you.

*Man.* Why that was bravely spoken, John, and like a man.

*J. Moody.* Ah, weast heart! were measter but hawf the mon that I am——Ods wookers! thof' he'll speak stautly, too, sometimes—But then he canno' hawld it——no, he canno' hawld it.

*Lord Town.*
*Lady Grace.* } Ha, ha, ha!
*Man.*

*J. Moody.* Ods flesh! but I mun hie me whoam; the coach will be coming every hour naw—but measter charged me to find your worship out; for he has hugey business with you: and will certainly wait upon you by that time he can put on a clean neck-cloth.

*Man.* Oh, John! I'll wait upon him.

*J. Moody.* Why you wonno' be so kind, wull ye?

*Man.* If you'll tell me where you lodge.

*J. Moody.* Just i' the street next to where

your worship dwells, at the sign of the golden ball—It's gold all over; where they sell ribbons and flappits, and other sort of geer for gentlewomen.

*Man.* A milliner's!

*J. Moody.* Ay, ay, one Mrs Motherly.——— Waunds, she has a couple of clever girls there, stitching i' the fore-room.

*Man.* Yes, yes, she's a woman of good business, no doubt on't——Who recommended that house to you, John?

*J. Moody.* The greatest good fortune in the world, sure; for, as I was gaping about the streets, who should look out of the window there, but the fine gentleman that was always riding by our coach side at York races——Count——Basset; ay, that's he.

*Man.* Basset! Oh, I remember! I know him by sight.

*J. Moody.* Well, to be sure, as civil a gentleman to see to——

*Man.* As any sharper in town. [*Asside.*

*J. Moody.* At York, he used to breakfast with my lady every morning.

*Man.* Yes, yes; and I suppose her ladyship will return his compliment here in town.

[*Aside.*

*J. Moody.* Well, measter——

*Lord Town.* My service to sir Francis, and my lady, John.

*Lady Grace.* And mine, pray, Mr Moody.

*J. Moody.* Aye, your honours;——they'll be proud on't, I dare say.

*Man.* I'll bring my compliments myself: so, honest John——

*J. Moody.* Dear Measter Manly! the goodness of goodness bless and preserve you!

[*Exit* J. MOODY.

*Lord Town.* What a natural creature 'tis!

*Lady Grace.* Well, I can't but think John, in a wet afternoon in the country, must be very good company.

*Lord Town.* Oh, the tramontane! If this were known at half the quadrille tables in town, they would lay down their cards to laugh at you.

*Lady Grace.* And the minute they took them up again, they would do the same at the losers—But to let you see, that I think good company may sometimes want cards to keep them together; what think you, if we three sat soberly down to kill an hour at ombre?

*Man.* I shall be too hard for you, madam.

*Lady Grace.* No matter; I shall have as much advantage of my lord, as you have of me.

*Lord Town.* Say you so, madam? have at you, then. Here! get the ombre table, and cards.

[*Exit* LORD TOWNLY.

*Lady Grace.* Come, Mr Manly———I know you don't forgive me now.

*Man.* I don't know whether I ought to forgive your thinking so, madam. Where do you imagine I could pass my time so agreeably?

*Lady Grace.* I'm sorry my lord is not here, to take his share of the compliment—But he'll wonder what's become of us.

*Man.* I'll follow in a moment, madam—

[*Exit* LADY GRACE.

It must be so—She sees I love her—yet with what unoffending decency she avoids an explanation? How amiable is every hour of her conduct! What a vile opinion have I had of the whole sex, for these ten years past, which this sensible creature has recovered in less than one! Such a companion, sure, might compensate all the irksome disappointments that pride, folly, and falsehood, ever gave me!

Could women regulate, like her, their lives,
What halcyon days were in the gift of wives!
Vain rovers, then, might envy what they hate;
And only fools would mock the married state.

[*Exit.*

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.—MRS MOTHERLY'S *house.*

*Enter* COUNT BASSET *and* MRS MOTHERLY.

*Count Bas.* I TELL you there is not such a family in England for you. Do you think I would have gone out of your lodgings for any body that was not sure to make you easy for the winter?

*Moth.* Nay, I see nothing against it, sir,—but the gentleman's being a parliament-man; and when people may, as it were, think one impertinent, or be out of humour, you know, when a body comes to ask for one's own———

*Count Bas.* Pshaw! Prithee never trouble thy head: his pay is as good as the bank—Why, he has above two thousand a-year.

*Moth.* Alas-a-day, that's nothing! your people of ten thousand a-year have ten thousand things to do with it.

*Count Bas.* Nay, if you are afraid of being out of your money, what do you think of going a little with me, Mrs Motherly?

*Moth.* As how?

*Count Bas.* Why, I have a game in my hand, in which, if you'll croup me, that is, help me to play it, you shall go five hundred to nothing.

*Moth.* Say you so? Why, then, I go, sir—and now, pray let's see your game.

*Count Bas.* Look you, in one word, my cards lie thus———When I was down this summer at York, I happened to lodge in the same house with this knight's lady, that's now coming to lodge with you.

*Moth.* Did you so, sir?

*Count Bas.* And sometimes had the honour to breakfast, and pass an idle hour with her——

*Moth.* Very good; and here, I suppose, you would have the impudence to sup and be busy with her.

*Count Bas.* Pshaw! prithee, hear me.

*Moth.* Is this your game? I would not give sixpence for it. What! you have a passion for her pin-money——No, no; country ladies are not so flush of it!

*Count Bas.* Nay, if you won't have patience—

*Moth.* One had need to have a good deal, I am sure, to hear you talk at this rate. Is this your way of making my poor niece, Myrtilla, easy?

*Count Bas.* Death! I shall do it still, if the woman will but let me speak——

*Moth.* Had you not a letter from her this morning?

*Count Bas.* I have it here in my pocket—this is it. [*Shews it, and puts it up again.*

*Moth.* Ay; but I don't find you have made any answer to it.

*Count Bas.* How the devil can I, if you won't hear me?

*Moth.* What! hear you talk of another woman!

*Count Bas.* Oh, lud! Oh, lud! I tell you, I'll make her fortune——Ounds, I'll marry her!

*Moth.* A likely matter! If you would not do it when she was a maid, your stomach is not so sharp set now, I presume.

*Count Bas.* Hey-day! why, your head begins to turn, my dear! The devil! you did not think I proposed to marry her myself?

*Moth.* If you don't, who the devil do you think will marry her?

*Count Bas.* Why, a fool——

*Moth.* Humph! there may be sense in that—

*Count Bas.* Very good—one for t'other, then. If I can help her to a husband, why should you not come into my scheme of helping me to a wife?

*Moth.* Your pardon, sir. Ay, ay; in an honourable affair, you know you may command me. But, pray, where is this blessed wife and husband to be had?

*Count Bas.* Now, have a little patience—You must know then, that this country knight and his lady bring up in the coach with them their eldest son and a daughter, to teach them to wash their faces, and turn their toes out.

*Moth.* Good——

*Count Bas.* The son is an unlicked whelp, about sixteen, just taken from school; and begins to hanker after every wench in the family: the daughter, much of the same age, a pert forward hussy, who, having eight thousand pounds left her by an old doting grandmother, seems to have a devilish mind to be doing in her way, too.

*Moth.* And your design is to put her into business for life?

*Count Bas.* Look you—in short, Mrs Motherly, we gentlemen, whose occasional chariots roll only upon the four aces, are liable, sometimes, you know, to have a wheel out of order; which, I confess, is so much my case at present, that my dapple greys are reduced to a pair of ambling chairmen. Now, if, with your assistance, I can whip up this young jade into a hackney-coach, I may chance, in a day or two after, to carry her, in my own chariot, *en famille*, to an opera. Now, what do you say to me?

*Moth.* Why, I shall not sleep for thinking of it. But how will you prevent the family smoking your design?

*Count Bas.* By renewing my addresses to the mother.

*Moth.* And how will the daughter like that, think you?

*Count Bas.* Very well——whilst it covers her own affair.

*Moth.* That's true——it must do——but, as you say, one for t'other, sir; I stick to that—if you don't do my niece's business with the son, I'll blow you with the daughter, depend upon't.

*Count Bas.* 'Tis a bet—pay as we go, I tell you, and the five hundred shall be staked in a third hand.

*Moth.* That's honest——But here comes my niece. Shall we let her into the secret?

*Count Bas.* Time enough; may be I may touch upon it.

*Enter* MYRTILLA.

*Moth.* So, niece, are all the rooms done out, and the beds sheeted?

*Myr.* Yes, madam; but Mr Moody tells us, the lady always burns wax in her own chamber, and we have none in the house.

*Moth.* Odso! then I must beg your pardon, Count; this is a busy time, you know.

[*Exit* MRS MOTHERLY.

*Count Bas.* Myrtilla, how dost thou do, child?

*Myr.* As well as a losing gamester can.

*Count Bas.* Why, what have you lost?

*Myr.* What I shall never recover; and, what's worse, you, that have won it, don't seem to be much the better for it.

*Count Bas.* Why, child, dost thou ever see any body overjoyed for winning a deep stake six months after 'tis over?

*Myr.* Would I had never played for it!

*Count Bas.* Psha! hang these melancholy thoughts! We may be friends still.

*Myr.* Dull ones.

*Count Bas.* Useful ones, perhaps—suppose I should help thee to a good husband?

*Myr.* I suppose you'll think any one good enough, that will take me off your hands.

*Count Bas.* What do you think of the young country 'squire, the heir of the family that's coming to lodge here?

*Myr.* How should I know what to think of him?

*Count Bas.* Nay; I only give you the hint, child. It may be worth your while, at least, to

look about you——Hark! what bustle's that without?

*Enter* MRS MOTHERLY, *in haste.*

*Moth.* Sir, sir! the gentleman's coach is at the door; they are all come.

*Count Bas.* What! already?

*Moth.* They are just getting out!——Won't you step and lead in my lady? Do you be in the way, niece; I must run and receive them.

[*Exit* MRS MOTHERLY.

*Count Bas.* And think of what I told you.

[*Exit* COUNT.

*Myr.* Ay, ay; you have left me enough to think of as long as I live——A faithless fellow! I am sure I have been true to him; and for that only reason he wants to be rid of me. But, while women are weak, men will be rogues; and, for a bane to both their joys and ours, when our vanity indulges them in such innocent favours as make them adore us, we can never be well, till we grant them the very one that puts an end to their devotion—But here comes my aunt and the company.

MRS MOTHERLY *returns, shewing in* LADY WRONGHEAD, *led by* COUNT BASSET.

*Moth.* If your ladyship pleases to walk into this parlour, madam, only for the present, till your servants have got all your things in.

*Lady Wrong.* Well, dear sir, this is so infinitely obliging——I protest it gives me pain, though, to turn you out of your lodging thus.

*Count Bas.* No trouble in the least, madam; we single fellows are soon moved. Besides, Mrs Motherly's my old acquaintance, and I could not be her hindrance.

*Moth.* The Count is so well bred, madam, I dare say he would do a great deal more to accommodate your ladyship.

*Lady Wrong.* Oh, dear madam!—A good, well-bred sort of a woman.

[*Apart to the* COUNT.

*Count Bas.* Oh! madam, she is very much among people of quality: she is seldom without them in her house.

*Lady Wrong.* Are there a good many people of quality in this street, Mrs Motherly?

*Moth.* Now your ladyship is here, madam, I don't believe there is a house without them.

*Lady Wrong.* I am mighty glad of that; for, really, I think people of quality should always live among one another.

*Count Bas.* 'Tis what one would choose, indeed, madam.

*Lady Wrong.* Bless me! but where are the children all this while?

*Moth.* Sir Francis, madam, I believe, is taking care of them.

*Sir Fran.* [*Within.*] John Moody! stay you by the coach, and see all our things out—Come, children.

*Moth.* Here they are, madam.

*Enter* SIR FRANCIS, SQUIRE RICHARD, *and* MISS JENNY.

*Sir Fran.* Well, Count, I mun say it, this was koynd, indeed.

*Count Bas.* Sir Francis, give me leave to bid you welcome to London.

*Sir Fran.* Psha! how dost thou do, mon?—Waunds, I'm glad to see thee! A good sort of a house this.

*Count Bas.* Is not that Master Richard?

*Sir Fran.* Ey, ey, that's young Hopeful—Why dost not baw, Dick?

*Squire Rich.* So I do, feyther.

*Count Bas.* Sir, I'm glad to see you—I protest Mrs Jane is grown so, I should not have known her.

*Sir Fran.* Come forward, Jenny.

*Jenny.* Sure, papa! do you think I don't know how to behave myself?

*Count Bas.* If I have permission to approach her, Sir Francis.

*Jenny.* Lord, sir! I'm in such a frightful pickle— [*Salute.*

*Count Bas.* Every dress that's proper must become you, madam——you have been a long journey.

*Jenny.* I hope you will see me in a better tomorrow, sir.

[LADY WRONGHEAD *whispers* MRS MOTHERLY, *pointing to* MYRTILLA.

*Moth.* Only a niece of mine, madam, that lives with me: she will be proud to give your ladyship any assistance in her power.

*Lady Wrong.* A pretty sort of a young woman ——Jenny, you two must be acquainted.

*Jenny.* Oh, mamma, I am never strange in a strange place. [*Salutes* MYRTILLA.

*Myr.* You do me a great deal of honour, madam—Madam, your ladyship's welcome to London.

*Jenny.* Mamma, I like her prodigiously; she called me my ladyship.

*Squire Rich.* Pray, mother, mayn't I be acquainted with her, too?

*Lady Wrong.* You, you clown! stay till you learn a little more breeding first.

*Sir Fran.* Od's heart, my lady Wronghead! why do you baulk the lad? how should he ever learn breeding, if he does not put himself forward?

*Squire Rich.* Why, ay, feyther; does mother think 'at I'd be uncivil to her?

*Myr.* Master has so much good-humour, madam, he would soon gain upon any body.

[*He kisses* MYRTILLA.

*Squire Rich.* Lo' you there, mother; an you would but be quiet, she and I should do well enough.

*Lady Wrong.* Why, how now, sirrah! boys must not be so familiar.

*Squire Rich.* Why, an' I know nobody, how the murrain mun I pass my time here in a strange

place? Naw, you and I, and sister, forsooth, sometimes, in an afternoon, may play at one-and-thirty bone-ace purely.

*Jenny.* Speak for yourself, sir; d'ye think I play at such clownish games?

*Squire Rich.* Why, and you woant, yo' ma' let it aloane; then she and I, mayhap, will have a bawt at all-fours, without you.

*Sir Fran.* Noa, noa, Dick; that won't do, neither; you mun learn to make one at ombre, here, child.

*Myr.* If master pleases, I'll shew it him.

*Squire Rich.* What! the Humber! Hoy-day! why, does our river run to this tawn, feyther?

*Sir Fran.* Pooh! you silly tony! ombre is a geam at cards, that the better sort of people play three together at.

*Squire Rich.* Nay, the moare the merrier, I say; but sister is always so cross-grained——

*Jenny.* Lord! this boy is enough to deaf people—and one has really been stuffed up in a coach so long, that———Pray, madam, could not I get a little powder for my hair?

*Myr.* If you please to come along with me, madam. [*Exeunt* MYRTILLA *and* JENNY.

*Squire Rich.* What, has sister taken her away, naw! mess, I'll go and have a little game with them. [*Exit after them.*

*Lady Wrong.* Well, count, I hope you won't so far change your lodgings, but you will come, and be at home here sometimes?

*Sir Fran.* Ay! ay! pr'ythee come and take a bit of mutton with us, naw and tan, when thou'st naught to do.

*Count Bas.* Well, sir Francis, you shall find I'll make but very little ceremony.

*Sir Fran.* Why, ay now, that's hearty!

*Moth.* Will your ladyship please to refresh yourself with a dish of tea, after your fatigue? I think I have pretty good.

*Lady Wrong.* If you please, Mrs Motherly; but I believe we had best have it above stairs.

*Moth.* Very well, madam; it shall be ready immediately. [*Exit* MRS MOTHERLY.

*Lady Wrong.* Won't you walk up, sir?

*Sir Fran.* Moody!

*Count Bas.* Shan't we stay for Sir Francis, madam!

*Lady Wrong.* Lard! don't mind him: he will come, if he likes it.

*Sir Fran.* Ay! ay! ne'er heed me——I have things to look after.

[*Exeunt* LADY WRONGHEAD *and* COUNT BASSET.

*Enter* JOHN MOODY.

*J. Moody.* Did your worship want muh?

*Sir Fran.* Ay; is the coach cleared, and all our things in?

*J. Moody.* Aw but a few band-boxes, and the nook that's left o' the goose poy——But, a plague on him, th' monkey has gin us the slip, I think—I suppose he's goon to see his relations; for here looks to be a power of um in this tawn——but heavy Ralph is skawered after him.

*Sir Fran.* Why, let him go to the devil! no matter an the hawnds had had him a month agoe. ———but I wish the coach and horses were got safe to the inn! This is a sharp tawn; we mun look about us here, John; therefore, I would have you go along with Roger, and see that nobody runs away with them, before they get to the stable.

*J. Moody.* Alas-a-day, sir, I believe our awld cattle won't yeasly be run away with to-night—but howsomdever, we's take the best care we can of um, poor sawls.

*Sir Fran.* Well, well! make haste——

[MOODY *goes out, and returns.*

*J. Moody.* Ods flesh! here's measter Monly come to wait upo' your worship!

*Sir Fran.* Wheare is he?

*J. Moody.* Just coming in at threshould.

*Sir Fran.* Then goa about your business.

[*Exit* MOODY.

*Enter* MANLY.

Cousin Manly! Sir, I am your very humble servant.

*Man.* I heard you were come, sir Francis—and——

*Sir Fran.* Odsheart! this was kindly done of you, naw.

*Man.* I wish you may think it so, cousin! for I confess, I should have been better pleased to have seen you in any other place.

*Sir Fran.* How soa, sir?

*Man.* Nay, 'tis for your own sake; I am not concerned.

*Sir Fran.* Look you, cousin; thof I know you wish me well, yet I don't question I shall give you such weighty reasons for what I have done, that you will say, sir, this is the wisest journey that ever I made in my life.

*Man.* I think it ought to be, cousin; for I believe you will find it the most expensive one——your election did not cost you a trifle, I suppose.

*Sir Fran.* Why, ay! it's true! That—that did lick a little; but if a man's wise, (and I han't fawnd yet that I'm a fool) there are ways, cousin, to lick one's self whole again.

*Man.* Nay, if you have that secret——

*Sir Fran.* Don't you be fearful, cousin—you'll find that I know something.

*Man.* If it be any thing for your good, I should be glad to know it, too.

*Sir Fran.* In short, then, I have a friend in a corner, that has let me a little into what's what, at Westminster——that's one thing.

*Man.* Very well! but what good is that to do you?

*Sir Fran.* Why not to me, as much as it does other folks?

*Man.* Other people, I doubt, have the advantage of different qualifications.

*Sir Fran.* Why, ay! there's it, naw! you'll

say that I have lived all my days i' the country ——what then?—I'm o' the quorum——I have been at sessions, and I have made speeches there! ay, and at vestry, too———and mayhap they may find here,———that I have brought my tongue up to town with me! D'ye take me naw?

*Man.* If I take your case right, cousin, I am afraid the first occasion you will have for your eloquence here, will be, to shew that you have any right to make use of it at all.

*Sir Fran.* How d'ye mean?

*Man.* That Sir John Worthland has lodged a petition against you.

*Sir Fran.* Petition! why, aye! there let it lie—we'll find a way to deal with that, I warrant you! ——Why, you forget, cousin, sir John's o' the wrung side, mon?

*Man.* I doubt, sir Francis, that will do you but little service; for, in cases very notorious, which I take yours to be, there is such a thing as a short day, and dispatching them immediately.

*Sir Fran.* With all my heart! the sooner I send him home again, the better.

*Man.* And this is the scheme you have laid down, to repair your fortune?

*Sir Fran.* In one word, cousin, I think it my duty. The Wrongheads have been a considerable family ever since England was England: and, since the world knows I have talents wherewithal, they shan't say it's my fault, if I don't make as good a figure as any that ever were at the head on't.

*Man.* Nay, this project, as you have laid it, will come up to any thing your ancestors have done these five hundred years.

*Sir Fran.* And let me alone to work it: mayhap, I havn't told you all, neither——

*Man.* You astonish me! What! And is it full as practicable as what you have told me?

*Sir Fran.* Ay, thof' I say it——every whit, cousin. You'll find that I have more irons i' the fire than one; I doan't come of a fool's errand!

*Man.* Very well.

*Sir Fran.* In a word, my wife has got a friend at court, as well as myself, and her dowghter Jenny is naw pretty well grown up——

*Man.* [*Aside.*]—And what, in the devil's name, would he do with the dowdy?

*Sir Fran.* Naw, if I doan't lay in for a husband for her, mayhap, i' this tawn, she may be looking out for herself——

*Man.* Not unlikely.

*Sir Fran.* Therefore, I have some thoughts of getting her to be maid of honour.

*Man.* [*Aside.*]—Oh! he has taken my breath away; but I must hear him out—Pray, sir Francis, do you think her education has yet qualified her for a court?

*Sir Fran.* Why, the girl is a little too mettlesome, it's true; but she has tongue enough: she woan't be dasht: then she shall learn to daunce forthwith, and that will soon teach her how to stond still, you know.

*Man.* Very well; but when she is thus accomplished, you must still wait for a vacancy.

*Sir Fran.* Why, I hope one has a good chance for that every day, cousin: for, if I take it right, that's a post, that folks are not more willing to get into, than they are to get out of——It's like an orange-tree, upon that accawnt—It will bear blossoms, and fruit that's ready to drop, at the same time.

*Man.* Well, sir, you best know how to make good your pretensions. But, pray, where is my lady, and my young cousin? I should be glad to see them, too.

*Sir Fran.* She is but just taking a dish of tea with the count, and my landlady—I'll call her dawn.

*Man.* No, no; if she's engaged, I shall call again.

*Sir Fran.* Odsheart! But you mun see her naw, cousin; what! The best friend I have in the world! Here, sweetheart!—[*To a servant without.*]—Prithee, desire my lady and the gentleman to come dawn a bit; tell her, here's cousin Manly come to wait upon her.

*Man.* Pray, sir, who may the gentleman be?

*Sir Fran.* You mun know him, to be sure; why, its Count Basset.

*Man.* Oh! Is it he? Your family will be infinitely happy in his acquaintance.

*Sir Fran.* Troth! I think so, too: he's the civilest man that ever I knew in my life——Why! here he would go out of his own lodgings, at an hour's warning, purely to oblige my family.—— Was'nt that kind, naw?

*Man.* Extremely civil—the family is in admirable hands already. [*Aside.*

*Sir Fran.* Then my lady likes him hugely—all the time of York races, she would never be without him.

*Man.* That was happy, indeed! And a prudent man, you know, should always take care that his wife may have innocent company.

*Sir Fran.* Why, aye! that's it! and I think there could not be such another!

*Man.* Why, truly, for her purpose, I think not.

*Sir Fran.* Only naw and tan, he—he stonds a leetle too much upon ceremony; that's his fault.

*Man.* Oh, never fear! he'll mend that every day—Mercy on us! What a head he has! [*Aside.*

*Sir Fran.* So, here they come.

*Enter* LADY WRONGHEAD, COUNT BASSET, *and* MRS MOTHERLY.

*Lady Wrong.* Cousin Manly, this is infinitely obliging; I am extremely glad to see you.

*Man.* Your most obedient servant, madam; I am glad to see your ladyship look so well, after your journey.

*Lady Wrong.* Why, really, coming to London is apt to put a little more life in one's looks.

*Man.* Yet the way of living here, is very apt to deaden the complexion—and, give me leave

to tell you, as a friend, madam, you are come to the worst place in the world, for a good woman to grow better in.

*Lady Wrong.* Lord, cousin! How should people ever make any figure in life, that are always moped up in the country.

*Count Bas.* Your ladyship certainly takes the thing in quite a right light, madam. Mr Manly, your humble servant—a hem.

*Man.* Familiar puppy.—[*Aside.*]—Sir, your most obedient—I must be civil to the rascal, to cover my suspicion of him. [*Aside.*

*Count Bas.* Was you at White's this morning, sir?

*Man.* Yes, sir, I just called in.

*Count Bas.* Pray—what—was there any thing done there?

*Man.* Much as usual, sir; the same daily carcases, and the same crows about them.

*Count Bas.* The Demoivre-Baronet had a bloody tumble yesterday.

*Man.* I hope, sir, you had your share of him.

*Count Bas.* No, faith; I came in when it was all over—I think I just made a couple of bets with him, took up a cool hundred, and so went to the King's Arms.

*Lady Wrong.* What a genteel easy manner he has! [*Aside.*

*Man.* A very hopeful acquaintance I have made here. [*Aside.*

*Enter* SQUIRE RICHARD, *with a wet brown paper on his face.*

*Sir Fran.* How naw, Dick! what's the matter with thy forehead, lad?

*Squire Rich.* I ha' gotten a knock upon't.

*Lady Wrong.* And how did you come by it, you heedless creature?

*Squire Rich.* Why, I was but running after sister, and t'other young woman, into a little room, just naw: and so, with that, they slapped the door full in my face, and gave me such a whurr here—I thought they had beaten my brains out; so, I got a dab of wet brown paper here, to swage it a while.

*Lady Wrong.* They served you right enough; will you never have done with your horse-play?

*Sir Fran.* Pooh, never heed it, lad; it will be well by to-morrow—the boy has a strong head.

*Man.* Yes, truly; his skull seems to be of a comfortable thickness. [*Aside.*

*Sir Fran.* Come, Dick, here's cousin Manly—Sir, this is your god-son.

*Squire Rich.* Honoured godfeyther, I crave leave to ask your blessing.

*Man.* Thou hast it, child—and, if it will do thee any good, may it be, to make thee, at least, as wise a man as thy father!

*Enter* MISS JENNY.

*Lady Wrong,* Oh, here's my daughter, too.—Miss Jenny! Don't you see your cousin, child?

*Man.* And as for thee, my pretty dear—[*Salutes her.*]—May'st thou be, at least, as good a woman as thy mother!

*Jenny.* I wish I may ever be so handsome, sir.

*Man.* Ha, Miss Pert! Now that's a thought that seems to have been hatcht in the girl on this side Highgate. [*Aside.*

*Sir Fran.* Her tongue is a little nimble, sir.

*Lady Wrong.* That's only from her country education, sir Francis. You know she has been kept too long there—so I brought her to London, sir, to learn a little more reserve and modesty.

*Man.* Oh, the best place in the world for it—every woman she meets will teach her something of it——There's the good gentlewoman of the house looks like a knowing person; even she, perhaps, will be so good as to shew her a little London behaviour.

*Moth.* Alas, sir! miss won't stand long in need of my instruction.

*Man.* That I dare say. What thou canst teach her, she will soon be mistress of. [*Aside.*

*Moth.* If she does, sir, they shall always be at her service.

*Lady Wrong.* Very obliging indeed, Mrs Motherly!

*Sir Fran.* Very kind and civil, truly!—I think we are got into a mighty good hawse here.

*Man.* Oh, yes; and very friendly company.

*Count Bas.* Humph! 'Egad I don't like his looks—he seems a little smoky—I believe I had as good brush off—If I stay, I don't know but he may ask me some odd questions.

*Man.* Well, sir; I believe you and I do but hinder the family—

*Count Bas.* It is very true, sir—I was just thinking of going—He don't care to leave me, I see: but it's no matter, we have time enough.—[*Aside.*]—And so, ladies, without farther ceremony, your humble servant.

[*Exit* COUNT BASSET, *and drops a letter.*

*Lady Wrong.* Ha! What paper's this? Some billet-doux, I'll lay my life; but this is no place to examine it. [*Puts it in her pocket.*

*Sir Fran.* Why in such haste, cousin?

*Man.* Oh, my lady must have a great many affairs upon her hands, after such a journey.

*Lady Wrong.* I believe, sir, I shall not have much less every day, while I stay in this town, of one sort or other.

*Man.* Why, truly, ladies seldom want employment here, madam.

*Jenny.* And mamma did not come to it to be idle, sir.

*Man.* Nor you, neither, I dare say, my young mistress.

*Jenny.* I hope not, sir.

*Man.* Ha, Miss Mettle! Where are you going, sir?

*Sir Fran.* Only to see you to the door, sir.

*Man.* Oh, sir Francis, I love to come and go, without ceremony.

*Sir Fran.* Nay, sir; I must do as you will have me—Your humble servant.

[*Exit* MANLY.

*Jenny.* This cousin Manly, papa, seems to be but of an odd sort of a crusty humour—I don't like him half so well as the count.

*Sir Fran.* Pooh! that's another thing, child—Cousin is a little proud, indeed; but, however, you must always be civil to him, for he has a deal of money; and nobody knows who he may give it to.

*Lady Wrong.* Psha! a fig for his money! you have so many projects of late about money, since you are a parliament man. What! we must make ourselves slaves to his impertinent humours, eight or ten years, perhaps, in hopes to be his heirs, and then he will be just old enough to marry his maid.

*Moth.* Nay, for that matter, madam, the town says he is going to be married already.

*Sir Fran.* Who! cousin Manly?

*Lady Wrong.* To whom, pray?

*Moth.* Why, is it possible your ladyship should know nothing of it!—To my lord Townly's sister, lady Grace.

*Lady Wrong.* Lady Grace!

*Moth.* Dear madam, it has been in the newspapers!

*Lady Wrong.* I don't like that, neither.

*Sir Fran.* Naw, I do; for then it's likely it mayn't be true.

*Lady Wrong.* [*Aside.*]—If it is not too far gone, at least it may be worth one's while to throw a rub in his way.

*Squire Rich.* Pray, feyther, haw lung will it be to supper?

*Sir Fran.* Odso! that's true; step to the cook, lad, and ask what she can get us.

*Moth.* If you please, sir, I'll order one of my maids to shew her where she may have any thing you have a mind to.

*Sir Fran.* Thank you kindly, Mrs Motherly.

*Squire Rich.* Ods-flesh! What, is not it i' the hawse yet—I shall be famished—But hawld! I'll go and ask Doll, an' there's none o' the goose poy left.

*Sir Fran.* Do so; and, do'st hear, Dick?—see if there's e'er a bottle o' the strong beer that came i' th' coach with us—if there be, clap a toast in it, and bring it up.

*Squire Rich.* With a little nutmeg and sugar, shawn'a I, feyther?

*Sir Fran.* Aye, aye; as thee and I always drink it for breakfast—Go thy ways! and I'll fill a pipe i' th' mean while.

[*Takes one from a pocket-case, and fills it.*—*Exit* SQUIRE RICHARD.

*Lady Wrong.* This boy is always thinking of his belly.

*Sir Fran.* Why, my dear, you may allow him to be a little hungry after his journey.

*Lady Wrong.* Nay, even breed him your own way—He has been cramming, in or out of the coach, all this day, I am sure—I wish my poor girl could eat a quarter as much.

*Jenny.* Oh, as for that, I could eat a great deal more, mamma; but, then, mayhap, I should grow coarse, like him, and spoil my shape.

*Lady Wrong.* Aye; so thou wouldst, my dear.

*Enter* SQUIRE RICHARD, *with a full tankard.*

*Squire Rich.* Here, feyther, I ha' browght it—it's well I went as I did; for our Doll had just baked a toast, and was going to drink it herself.

*Sir Fran.* Why, then, here's to thee, Dick!

[*Drinks.*

*Squire Rich.* Thonk you, feyther.

*Lady Wrong.* Lord, sir Francis, I wonder you can encourage the boy to swill so much of that lubberly liquor!—it's enough to make him quite stupid.

*Squire Rich.* Why, it never hurts me, mother; and I sleep like a hawnd after it. [*Drinks.*

*Sir Fran.* I am sure I ha' drunk it these thirty years, and, by your leave, madam, I don't know that I want wit: ha, ha!

*Jenny.* But you might have had a great deal more, papa, if you would have been governed by my mother.

*Sir Fran.* Daughter, he that is governed by his wife, has no wit at all.

*Jenny.* Then I hope I shall marry a fool, sir; for I love to govern, dearly.

*Sir Fran.* You are too pert, child; it don't do well in a young woman.

*Lady Wrong.* Pray, sir Francis, don't snub her; she has a fine growing spirit, and, if you check her so, you will make her as dull as her brother there.

*Squire Rich.* [*After a long draught.*]—Indeed, mother, I think my sister is too forward.

*Jenny.* You! You think I'm too forward! Sure, brother mud, your head's too heavy to think of any thing but your belly!

*Lady Wrong.* Well said, miss! he's none of your master, though he is your elder brother.

*Squire Rich.* No, nor she shawnt be my mistress, while she's younger sister.

*Sir Fran.* Well said, Dick! Shew 'em that stawt liquor makes a stawt heart, lad!

*Squire Rich.* So I will! and I'll drink ageen, for all her. [*Drinks.*

*Enter* JOHN MOODY.

*Sir Fran.* So, John, how are the horses?

*J. Moody.* Troth, sir, I ha' noa good opinion o' this tawn; it's made up o' mischief, I think.

*Sir Fran.* What's the matter naw?

*J. Moody.* Why, I'll tell your worship—before we were gotten to th' street end, with the coach, here, a great luggerheaded cart, with wheels as thick as a brick wall, laid hawld on't, and has poo'd it aw to bits; crack went the perch! down goes the coach! and whang says the glas-

ses, all to shivers! Marcy upon us! an this be London, would we were aw weel in the country ageen!

*Jenny.* What have you to do, to wish us all in the country again, Mr Lubber? I hope we shall not go into the country again these seven years, mamma; let twenty coaches be pulled to pieces.

*Sir Fran.* Hold your tongue, Jenny! Was Roger in no fault in all this?

*J. Moody.* Noa, sir, nor I, noather. Are not yow ashamed, says Roger to the carter, to do such an unkind thing by strangers? Noa, says he, you bumkin. Sir, he did the thing on very purpose! and so the folks said that stood by—Very well, says Roger, yow shall see what our meyster will say to ye! Your meyster, says he; your meyster may kiss my——and so he clapped his hand just there, and like your worship. Flesh! I thought they had better breeding in this town.

*Sir Fran.* I'll teach this rascal some, I'll warrant him! Odsbud! If I take him in hand, I'll play the devil with him.

*Squire Rich.* Aye, do, feyther; have him before the parliament.

*Sir Fran.* Odsbud! and so I will—I will make him know who I am! Where does he live?

*J. Moody.* I believe in London, sir.

*Sir Fran.* What's the rascal's name?

*J. Moody.* I think I heard somebody call him Dick.

*Squire Rich.* What, my name!

*Sir Fran.* Where did he go?

*J. Moody.* Sir, he went home.

*Sir Fran.* Where's that?

*J. Moody.* By my troth, sir, I doan't know! I heard him say he would cross the same street again to-morrow; and if we had a mind to stand in his way, he would pooll us over and over again.

*Sir Fran.* Will he so? Odzooks! get me a constable.

*Lady Wrong.* Pooh! get you a good supper. Come, sir Francis, don't put yourself in a heat for what can't be helped. Accidents will happen to people that travel abroad to see the world—For my part, I think it's a mercy it was not overturned before we were all out on't.

*Sir Fran.* Why ay, that's true again, my dear.

*Lady Wrong.* Therefore, see to-morrow if we can buy one at second-hand, for present use; so bespeak a new one, and then all's easy.

*J. Moody.* Why, troth, sir, I doan't think this could have held you above a day longer.

*Sir Fran.* D'ye think so, John?

*J. Moody.* Why, you ha' had it ever since your worship were high sheriff.

*Sir Fran.* Why, then, go and see what Doll has got us for supper—and come and get off my boots. [*Exit* SIR FRAN.

*Lady Wrong.* In the mean time, miss, do you step to Handy, and bid her get me some fresh night-clothes. [*Exit* LADY WRONG.

*Jenny.* Yes, mamma; and some for myself, too. [*Exit* JENNY.

*Squire Rich.* Ods-flesh! and what mun I do all alone?

I'll e'en seek out where t'other pratty miss is,
And she and I'll go play at cards for kisses.
[*Exit.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.—LORD TOWNLY'S *house.*

*Enter* LORD TOWNLY, *a Servant attending.*

*Lord Town.* WHO's there?

*Ser.* My lord?

*Lord Town.* Bid them get dinner—lady Grace, your servant.

*Enter* LADY GRACE.

*Lady Grace.* What, is the house up already? My lady is not drest yet.

*Lord Town.* No matter—it's three o'clock—she may break my rest, but she shall not alter my hours.

*Lady Grace.* Nay, you need not fear that now, for she dines abroad.

*Lord Town.* That, I suppose, is only an excuse for her not being ready yet.

*Lady Grace.* No, upon my word, she is engaged in company.

*Lord Town.* Where, pray?

*Lady Grace.* At my lady Revel's; and you know they never dine till supper-time.

*Lord Town.* No, truly——she is one of those orderly ladies, who never let the sun shine upon any of their vices!——But, prithee, sister, what humour is she in to-day?

*Lady Grace.* Oh, in tip-top spirits, I can assure you—she won a good deal last night.

*Lord Town.* I know no difference between her winning or losing, while she continues her course of life.

*Lady Grace.* However, she is better in good humour than bad.

*Lord Town.* Much alike: when she is in good humour, other people only are the better for it; when in a very ill humour, then, indeed, I seldom fail to have my share of her.

*Lady Grace.* Well, we won't talk of that now—Does any body dine here?

*Lord Town.* Manly promised me—By the way, madam, what do you think of his last conversation?

*Lady Grace.* I am a little at a stand about it.

*Lord Town.* How so?

*Lady Grace.* Why—I don't know how he can

ever have any thoughts of me, that could lay down such severe rules upon wives in my hearing.

*Lord Town.* Did you think his rules unreasonable?

*Lady Grace.* I can't say I did; but he might have had a little more complaisance before me, at least.

*Lord Town.* Complaisance is only a proof of good breeding, but his plainness was a certain proof of his honesty; nay, of his good opinion of you: for he would never have opened himself so freely, but in confidence that your good sense could not be disobliged at it.

*Lady Grace.* My good opinion of him, brother, has hitherto been guided by yours: but I have received a letter this morning, that shews him a very different man from what I thought him.

*Lord Town.* A letter! from whom?

*Lady Grace.* That I don't know; but there it is. [*Gives a letter.*

*Lord Town.* Pray, let's see. [*Reads.*] 'The inclosed, madam, fell accidentally into my hands; 'if it no way concerns you, you will only have 'the trouble of reading this, from your sincere 'friend, and humble servant, Unknown,' &c.

*Lady Grace.* And this was the inclosed. [*Gives another.*

*Lord Town.* [*Reads.*] 'To Charles Manly, 'Esq.—Your manner of living with me of late, 'convinces me that I now grow as painful to you 'as to myself: but, however, though you can 'love me no longer, I hope you will not let me 'live worse than I did, before I left an honest 'income for the vain hopes of being ever yours.

MYRTILLA DUPE.'

'P. S. 'Tis above four months since I received 'a shilling from you.'

*Lady Grace.* What think you now?

*Lord Town.* I am considering——

*Lady Grace.* You see it's directed to him—

*Lord Town.* That's true; but the postscript seems to be a reproach that I think he is not capable of deserving.

*Lady Grace.* But who could have concern enough to send it to me?

*Lord Town.* I have observed that these sort of letters, from unknown friends, generally come from secret enemies.

*Lady Grace.* What would you have me do in it?

*Lord Town.* What I think you ought to do—fairly shew it to him, and say I advised you to it.

*Lady Grace.* Will not that have a very odd look from me?

*Lord Town.* Not at all, if you use my name in it; if he is innocent, his impatience to appear so will discover his regard to you. If he is guilty, it will be the best way of preventing his addresses.

*Lady Grace.* But what pretence have I to put him out of countenance?

*Lord Town.* I can't think there's any fear of that.

*Lady Grace.* Pray, what is it you do think, then?

*Lord Town.* Why, certainly, that it's much more probable this letter may be all an artifice, than that he is in the least concerned in it——

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* Mr Manly, my lord.

*Lord Town.* Do you receive him, while I step a minute in to my lady. [*Exit* LORD TOWNLY.

*Enter* MANLY.

*Man.* Madam, your most obedient; they told me my lord was here.

*Lady Grace.* He will be here presently; he is but just gone in to my sister.

*Man.* So, then, my lady dines with us?

*Lady Grace.* No; she is engaged.

*Man.* I hope you are not of her party, madam?

*Lady Grace.* Not till after dinner.

*Man.* And, pray, how may she have disposed of the rest of the day?

*Lady Grace.* Much as usual; she has visits till about eight; after that, till court-time, she is to be at quadrille, at Mrs Idle's; after the drawing-room, she takes a short supper with my lady Moonlight; and, from thence, they go together to my lord Noble's assembly.

*Man.* And are you to do all this with her, madam?

*Lady Grace.* Only a few of the visits: I would, indeed, have drawn her to the play; but I doubt we have so much upon our hands, that it will not be practicable.

*Man.* But how can you forbear all the rest of it?

*Lady Grace.* There's no great merit in forbearing what one is not charmed with.

*Man.* And, yet, I have found that very difficult in my time.

*Lady Grace.* How do you mean?

*Man.* Why, I have passed a great deal of my life in the hurry of the ladies, though I was generally better pleased when I was at quiet without them.

*Lady Grace.* What induced you, then, to be with them?

*Man.* Idleness, and the fashion.

*Lady Grace.* No mistresses in the case?

*Man.* To speak honestly—yes—Being often in the toy-shop, there was no forbearing the baubles.

*Lady Grace.* And of course, I suppose, sometimes you were tempted to pay for them twice as much as they were worth?

*Man.* Why, really, where fancy only makes the choice, madam, no wonder if we are generally bubbled in those sort of bargains; which, I confess, has been often my case: for I had constantly some coquette or other upon my hands,

whom I could love, perhaps, just enough to put it in her power to plague me.

*Lady Grace.* And that's a power, I doubt, commonly made use of.

*Man.* The amours of a coquette, madam, seldom have any other view; I look upon them and prudes to be nuisances just alike, though they seem very different: the first are always plaguing the men, and the others are always abusing the women.

*Lady Grace.* And yet both of them do it for the same vain ends; to establish a false character of being virtuous.

*Man.* Of being chaste, they mean; for they know no other virtue; and, upon the credit of that, they traffic in every thing else that's vicious. They (even against nature) keep their chastity, only because they find they have more power to do mischief with it, than they could possibly put in practice without it.

*Lady Grace.* Hold, Mr Manly! I am afraid this severe opinion of the sex is owing to the ill choice you have made of your mistresses.

*Man.* In a great measure it may be so; but, madam, if both these characters are so odious, how vastly valuable is that woman, who has attained all they aim at, without the aid of the folly or vice of either!

*Lady Grace.* I believe those sort of women to be as scarce, sir, as the men that believe there are any such; or that, allowing such, have virtue enough to deserve them.

*Man.* That could deserve them, then——had been a more favourable reflection.

*Lady Grace.* Nay, I speak only from my little experience; for (I'll be free with you, Mr Manly) I don't know a man in the world, that, in appearance, might better pretend to a woman of the first merit than yourself: and yet, I have a reason in my hand, here, to think you have your failings.

*Man.* I have infinite, madam; but I am sure the want of an implicit respect for you is not among the number——Pray, what is in your hand, madam?

*Lady Grace.* Nay, sir, I have no title to it, for the direction is to you.

[*Gives him a letter.*

*Man.* To me! I don't remember the hand.

[*Reads to himself.*

*Lady Grace.* I can't perceive any change of guilt in him; and his surprise seems natural.—[*Aside.*] Give me leave to tell you one thing by the way, Mr Manly, that I should never have shewn you this, but that my brother enjoined me to it.

*Man.* I take that to proceed from my lord's good opinion of me, madam.

*Lady Grace.* I hope, at least, it will stand as an excuse for my taking this liberty.

*Man.* I never yet saw you do any thing, madam, that wanted an excuse; and I hope you will not give me an instance to the contrary, by refusing the favour I am going to ask you.

*Lady Grace.* I don't believe I shall refuse any that you think proper to ask.

*Man.* Only this, madam, to indulge me so far as to let me know how this letter came into your hand.

*Lady Grace.* Inclosed to me in this, without a name.

*Man.* If there be no secret in the contents, madam——

*Lady Grace.* Why—there is an impertinent insinuation in it: but as I know your good sense will think it so, too, I will venture to trust you.

*Man.* You will oblige me, madam.

[*He takes the other letter, and reads.*

*Lady Grace,* [*Aside.*] Now am I in the oddest situation! methinks our conversation grows terribly critical. This must produce something—Oh, lud! would it were over.

*Man.* Now, madam, I begin to have some light into the poor project that is at the bottom of all this.

*Lady Grace.* I have no notion of what could be proposed by it.

*Man.* A little patience, madam——First, as to the insinuation you mention——

*Lady Grace.* O! what is he going to say now? [*Aside.*

*Man.* Though my intimacy with my lord may have allowed my visits to have been very frequent here of late; yet, in such a talking town as this, you must not wonder if a great many of those visits are placed to your account; and this, taken for granted, I suppose, has been told to my Lady Wronghead, as a piece of news, since her arrival, not improbably with many more imaginary circumstances.

*Lady Grace.* My lady Wronghead!

*Man.* Ay, madam; for I am positive this is her hand.

*Lady Grace.* What view could she have in writing it?

*Man.* To interrupt any treaty of marriage she may have heard I am engaged in; because, if I die without heirs, her family expects that some part of my estate may return to them again.—But I hope she is so far mistaken, that if this letter has given you the least uneasiness—I shall think that the happiest moment of my life.

*Lady Grace.* That does not carry your usual complaisance, Mr Manly!

*Man.* Yes, madam, because I am sure I can convince you of my innocence.

*Lady Grace.* I am sure I have no right to inquire into it.

*Man.* Suppose you may not, madam; yet you may, very innocently, have so much curiosity.

*Lady Grace.* With what an artful gentleness he steals into my opinion! [*Aside.*] Well, sir, I won't pretend to have so little of the woman in me, as to want curiosity—But, pray, do you sup-

pose, then, this Myrtilla is a real, or a fictitious name?

*Man.* Now I recollect, madam, there is a young woman in the house where my lady Wronghead lodges, that I heard somebody call Myrtilla: this letter may be written by her—But how it came directed to me, I confess, is a mystery, that, before I ever presume to see your ladyship again, I think myself obliged in honour to find out. [*Going.*

*Lady Grace.* Mr Manly—you are not going?

*Man.* 'Tis but to the next street, madam; I shall be back in ten minutes.

*Lady Grace.* Nay, but dinner's just coming up.

*Man.* Madam, I can neither eat nor rest, till I see an end of this affair.

*Lady Grace.* But this is so odd! why should any silly curiosity of mine drive you away?

*Man.* Since you won't suffer it to be yours, madam, then it shall be only to satisfy my own curiosity—— [*Exit* MAN.

*Lady Grace.* Well—and now, what am I to think of all this? Or, suppose an indifferent person had heard every word we have said to one another, what would they have thought on't?—Would it have been very absurd to conclude, he is seriously inclined to pass the rest of his life with me? I hope not—for I am sure the case is terribly clear on my side; and why may not I, without vanity, suppose my——unaccountable somewhat—has done as much execution upon him? Why—because he never told me so—nay, he has not so much as mentioned the word love, or ever said one civil thing to my person—well—but he has said a thousand to my good opinion, and has certainly got it——had he spoke first to my person, he had paid a very ill compliment to my understanding——I should have thought him impertinent, and never have troubled my head about him; but, as he has managed the matter, at least I am sure of one thing, that let his thoughts be what they will, I shall never trouble my head about any other man as long as I live.

*Enter* MRS TRUSTY.

Well, Mrs Trusty, is my sister dressed yet?

*Trusty.* Yes, madam; but my lord has been courting her so, I think, till they are both out of humour.

*Lady Grace.* How so?

*Trusty.* Why, it began, madam, with his lordship's desiring her ladyship to dine at home today—upon which, my lady said she could not be ready; upon that, my lord ordered them to stay the dinner; and then my lady ordered the coach: then my lord took her short, and said he had ordered the coachman to set up; then my lady made him a great curtsey, and said she would wait till his lordship's horses had dined, and was mighty pleasant: but, for fear of the worst, madam, she whispered me—to get her chair ready. [*Exit* TRUSTY.

*Lady Grace.* Oh, here they come! and, by their looks, seem a little unfit for company. [*Exit* LADY GRACE.

*Enter* LADY TOWNLY, LORD TOWNLY *following.*

*Lady Town.* Well, look you, my lord, I can bear it no longer; nothing still but about my faults, my faults: an agreeable subject, truly!

*Lord Town.* Why, madam, if you won't hear of them, how can I ever hope to see you mend them?

*Lady Town.* Why, I don't intend to mend them—I can't mend them——you know I have tried to do it a hundred times—and—it hurts me so—I can't bear it.

*Lord Town.* And I, madam, can't bear this daily licentious abuse of your time and character.

*Lady Town.* Abuse! astonishing! when the universe knows I am never better company than when I am doing what I have a mind to! But to see this world! that men can never get over that silly spirit of contradiction—Why, but last Thursday, now,—there you wisely amended one of my faults, as you call them—you insisted upon my not going to the masquerade—and, pray, what was the consequence? Was not I as cross as the devil all the night after? Was not I forced to get company at home? And was it not almost three o'clock in the morning before I was able to come to myself again! And then the fault is not mended neither——for next time I shall only have twice the inclination to go: so that all this mending, and mending, you see, is but darning an old ruffle, to make it worse than it was before.

*Lord Town.* Well, the manner of women's living of late is insupportable; and one way or other——

*Lady Town.* It's to be mended, I suppose? why, so it may: but then, my dear lord, you must give one time——and when things are at worst, you know, they may mend themselves, ha, ha!

*Lord Town.* Madam, I am not in a humour now to trifle.

*Lady Town.* Why then, my lord, one word of fair argument—to talk with you in your own way, now—You complain of my late hours, and I of your early ones—so far we are even, you'll allow—But pray, which gives us the best figure in the eye of the polite world? my active, spirited three in the morning, or your dull, drowsy eleven at night? Now, I think, one has the air of a woman of quality, and t'other of a plodding mechanic, that goes to bed betimes, that he may rise early to open his shop—Faugh!

*Lord Town.* Fy, fy, madam! is this your way of reasoning? 'tis time to wake you, then—

'Tis not your ill hours alone that disturb me, but as often the ill company that occasion those ill hours.

*Lady Town.* Sure I don't understand you now, my lord; what ill company do I keep?

*Lord Town.* Why, at best, women that lose their money, and men that win it; or, perhaps, men that are voluntary bubbles at one game, in hopes a lady will give them fair play at another. Then, that unavoidable mixture with known rakes, concealed thieves, and sharpers in embroidery—or, what, to me, is still more shocking, that herd of familiar, chattering, crop-eared coxcombs, who are so often like monkeys, there would be no knowing them asunder, but that their tails hang from their heads, and the monkey's grows where it should do.

*Lady Town.* And a husband must give eminent proof of his sense, that thinks these powder-puffs dangerous.

*Lord Town.* Their being fools, madam, is not always the husband's security; or, if it were, fortune sometimes gives them advantages that might make a thinking woman tremble.

*Lady Town.* What do you mean?

*Lord Town.* That women sometimes lose more than they are able to pay: and if a creditor be a little pressing, the lady may be reduced to try, if, instead of gold, the gentleman will accept of a trinket.

*Lady Town.* My lord, you grow scurrilous; you'll make me hate you. I'll have you to know, I keep company with the politest people in town; and the assemblies I frequent are full of such.

*Lord Town.* So are the churches——now and then.

*Lady Town.* My friends frequent them, too, as well as the assemblies.

*Lord Town.* Yes, and would do it oftener, if a groom of the chambers were there allowed to furnish cards to the company.

*Lady Town.* I see what you drive at all this while: you would lay an imputation on my fame, to cover your own avarice. I might take any pleasures, I find, that were not expensive.

*Lord Town.* Have a care, madam; don't let me think you only value your chastity to make me reproachable for not indulging you in every thing else that's vicious---I, madam, have a reputation, too, to guard, that's dear to me as yours---The follies of an ungoverned wife may make the wisest man uneasy; but 'tis his own fault, if ever they make him contemptible,

*Lady Town.* My lord---you would make a woman mad!

*Lord Town.* You'd make a man a fool!

*Lady Town.* If Heaven has made you otherwise, that won't be in my power.

*Lord Town.* Whatever may be in your inclination, madam, I'll prevent your making me a beggar, at least.

*Lady Town.* A beggar! Crœsus! I'm out of patience!—I won't come home till four to-morrow morning.

*Lord Town.* That may be, madam; but I'll order the doors to be locked at twelve.

*Lady Town.* Then I won't come home till to-morrow night.

*Lord Town.* Then, madam—you shall never come home again. [*Exit* LORD TOWNLY.

*Lady Town.* What does he mean? I never heard such a word from him in my life before! The man always used to have manners in his worst humours. There's something, that I don't see, at the bottom of all this—But his head's always upon some impracticable scheme or other; so I won't trouble mine any longer about him. Mr Manly, your servant.

*Enter* MANLY.

*Man.* I ask pardon for intrusion, madam; but I hope my business with my lord will excuse it.

*Lady Town.* I believe you'll find him in the next room, sir.

*Man.* Will you give me leave, madam?

*Lady Town.* Sir—you have my leave, though you were a lady.

*Man.* [*Aside.*] What a well-bred age do we live in! [*Exit* MANLY.

*Enter* LADY GRACE.

*Lady Town.* Oh, my dear lady Grace! how could you leave me so unmercifully alone all this while?

*Lady Grace.* I thought my lord had been with you.

*Lady Town.* Why, yes—and therefore I wanted your relief; for he has been in such a flutter here——

*Lady Grace.* Bless me! for what?

*Lady Town.* Only our usual breakfast; we have each of us had our dish of matrimonial comfort this morning——We have been charming company!

*Lady Grace.* I am mighty glad of it: sure it must be a vast happiness, when a man and a wife can give themselves the same turn of conversation!

*Lady Town.* Oh, the prettiest thing in the world!

*Lady Grace.* Now I should be afraid, that where two people are every day together so, they must often be in the want of something to talk upon.

*Lady Town.* Oh, my dear, you are the most mistaken in the world! married people have things to talk of, child, that never enter into the imagination of others. Why, here's my lord and I, now, we have not been married above two short years, you know, and we have already eight or ten things constantly in bank, that, whenever we want company, we can take up any one of them for two hours together, and the subject never the flatter; nay, if we have occassion for it,

it will be as fresh next day, too, as it was the first hour it entertained us.

*Lady Grace.* Certainly that must be vastly pretty!

*Lady Town.* Oh, there's no life like it! Why, t'other day, for example, when you dined abroad, my lord and I, after a pretty cheerful *tête à tête* meal, sat us down by the fire-side in an easy, indolent, pick-tooth way, for about a quarter of an hour, as if we had not thought of any other's being in the room——At last, stretching himself, and yawning—My dear—says he——aw——you came home very late last night——'Twas but just turned of two, says I—I was in bed—aw—by eleven, says he—So you are every night, says I—Well, says he, I am amazed you can sit up so late—How can you be amazed, says I, at a thing that happens so often?—Upon which we entered into a conversation—and though this is a point has entertained us above fifty times already, we always find so many pretty new things to say upon it, that I believe in my soul it will last as long as we live.

*Lady Grace.* But pray, in such sort of family dialogues, (though extremely well for passing the time) don't there, now and then, enter some little witty sort of bitterness?

*Lady Town.* Oh, yes! which does not do amiss at all. A smart repartee, with a zest of recrimination at the head of it, makes the prettiest sherbet. Ay, ay, if we did not mix a little of the acid with it, a matrimonial society would be so luscious, that nothing but an old liquorish prude would be able to bear it.

*Lady Grace.* Well—certainly you have the most elegant taste———

*Lady Town.* Though, to tell you the truth, my dear, I rather think we squeezed a little too much lemon into it this bout! for it grew so sour at last, that—I think—I almost told him he was a fool—and he, again—talked something oddly of—turning me out of doors.

*Lady Grace.* Oh, have a care of that!

*Lady Town.* Nay, if he should, I may thank my own wise father for that———

*Lady Grace.* How so?

*Lady Town.* Why—when my good lord first opened his honourable trenches before me, my unaccountable papa, in whose hands I then was, gave me up at discretion.

*Lady Grace.* How do you mean?

*Lady Town.* He said, the wives of this age were come to that pass, that he would not desire even his own daughter should be trusted with pin-money; so that, my whole train of separate inclinations are left entirely at the mercy of a husband's odd humours.

*Lady Grace.* Why, that, indeed, is enough to make a woman of spirit look about her.

*Lady Town.* Nay, but to be serious, my dear; what would you really have a woman do, in my case?

*Lady Grace.* Why—if I had a sober husband, as you have, I would make myself the happiest wife in the world, by being as sober as he.

*Lady Town.* Oh, you wicked thing! how can you teaze one at this rate, when you know he is so very sober, that (except giving me money) there is not one thing in the world he can do to please me? And I, at the same time, partly by nature, and partly, perhaps, by keeping the best company, do, with my soul, love almost every thing he hates. I dote upon assemblies; my heart bounds at a ball; and at an opera—I expire. Then I love play to distraction; cards enchant me—and dice put me out of my little wits—Dear, dear hazard!—Oh, what a flow of spirits it gives one!—Do you never play at hazard, child?

*Lady Grace.* Oh, never! I don't think it sits well upon women; there's something so masculine, so much the air of a rake in it. You see how it makes the men swear and curse; and when a woman is thrown into the same passion—why—

*Lady Town.* That's very true; one is a little put to it, sometimes, not to make use of the same words to express it.

*Lady Grace.* Well—and, upon ill luck, pray what words are you really forced to make use of?

*Lady Town.* Why, upon a very hard case, indeed, when a sad wrong word is rising, just to one's tongue's end, I give a great gulp—and swallow it.

*Lady Grace.* Well; and is not that enough to make you forswear play as long as you live?

*Lady Town.* Oh, yes: I have forsworn it.

*Lady Grace.* Seriously?

*Lady Town.* Solemnly! a thousand times; but then one is constantly forsworn.

*Lady Grace.* And how can you answer that?

*Lady Town.* My dear, what we say, when we are losers, we look upon to be no more binding than a lover's oath, or a great man's promise. But I beg pardon, child; I should not lead you so far into the world; you are a prude, and design to live soberly.

*Lady Grace.* Why, I confess, my nature and my education do, in a good degree, incline me that way.

*Lady Town.* Well, how a woman of spirit (for you don't want that, child) can dream of living soberly, is to me inconceivable; for you will marry, I suppose?

*Lady Grace.* I can't tell but I may.

*Lady Town.* And won't you live in town?

*Lady Grace.* Half the year, I should like it very well.

*Lady Town.* My stars! and you would really live in London half the year, to be sober in it?

*Lady Grace.* Why not?

*Lady Town.* Why can't you as well go and be sober in the country?

*Lady Grace.* So I would—t'other half year.

*Lady Town.* And pray, what comfortable

scheme of life would you form, now, for your summer and winter sober entertainments?

*Lady Grace.* A scheme that, I think, might very well content us.

*Lady Town.* Oh, of all things, let's hear it!

*Lady Grace.* Why, in summer, I could pass my leisure hours in riding, in reading, walking by a canal, or sitting at the end of it under a great tree; in dressing, dining, chatting with an agreeable friend; perhaps, hearing a little music, taking a dish of tea, or a game of cards, soberly; managing my family, looking into its accounts, playing with my children, if I had any, or in a thousand other innocent amusements—soberly; and possibly, by these means, I might induce my husband to be as sober as myself—

*Lady Town.* Well, my dear, thou art an astonishing creature! For sure such primitive antediluvian notions of life have not been in any head these thousand years——Under a great tree! O, my soul!—But I beg we may have the sober town-scheme too—for I am charmed with the country one!

*Lady Grace.* You shall, and I'll try to stick to my sobriety there too.

*Lady Town.* Well, though I'm sure it will give me the vapours, I must hear it, however.

*Lady Grace.* Why, then, for fear of your fainting, madam, I will first so far come into the fashion, that I would never be dressed out of it—but still it should be soberly: for I can't think it any disgrace to a woman of my private fortune, not to wear her lace as fine as the wedding-suit of a first duchess. Though there is one extravagance I would venture to come up to.

*Lady Town.* Aye, now for it——

*Lady Grace.* I would every day be as clean as a bride.

*Lady Town.* Why, the men say, that's a great step to be made one—Well, now you are drest—Pray, let's see to what purpose?

*Lady Grace.* I would visit—that is, my real friends; but as little for form as possible. I would go to court; sometimes to an assembly, nay, play at quadrille——soberly: I would see all the good plays; and, because 'tis the fashion, now and then an opera———but I would not expire there, for fear I should never go again: and, lastly, I can't say, but for curiosity, if I liked my company, I might be drawn in once to a masquerade; and this, I think, is as far as any woman can go———soberly.

*Lady Town.* Well, if it had not been for that last piece of sobriety, I was just going to call for some surfeit-water.

*Lady Grace.* Why, don't you think, with the farther aid of breakfasting, dining, and taking the air, supping, sleeping, not to say a word of devotion, the four-and-twenty hours might roll over in a tolerable manner?

*Lady Town.* Tolerable! Deplorable! Why, child, all you propose is but to endure life; now, I want to enjoy it.

*Enter* MRS TRUSTY.

*Trust.* Madam, your ladyship's chair is ready.

*Lady Town.* Have the footmen their white flambeaux yet? For, last night, I was poisoned.

*Trust.* Yes, madam; there were some come in this morning. [*Exit* TRUSTY.

*Lady Town.* My dear, you will excuse me; but you know my time is so precious———

*Lady Grace.* That I beg I may not hinder your least enjoyment of it.

*Lady Town.* You will call on me at lady Revel's?

*Lady Grace.* Certainly.

*Lady Town.* But I am so afraid it will break into your scheme, my dear!

*Lady Grace.* When it does, I will——soberly break from you.

*Lady Town.* Why then, 'till we meet again, dear sister, I wish you all tolerable happiness. [*Exit* LADY TOWNLY.

*Lady Grace.* There she goes—Dash! into her stream of pleasures! Poor woman! she is really a fine creature; and sometimes infinitely agreeable; nay, take her out of the madness of this town, rational in her notions, and easy to live with: but she is so borne down by this torrent of vanity in vogue, she thinks every hour of her life is lost that she does not lead at the head of it. What it will end in, I tremble to imagine!—Ha, my brother! and Manly with him? I guess what they have been talking of——I shall hear it in my turn, I suppose; but it won't become me to be inquisitive. [*Exit* LADY GRACE.

*Enter* LORD TOWNLY *and* MANLY.

*Lord Town.* I did not think my lady Wronghead had such a notable brain: though I can't say she was so very wise, in trusting this silly girl, you call Myrtilla, with the secret.

*Man.* No, my lord, you mistake me; had the girl been in the secret, perhaps I had never come at it myself.

*Lord Town.* Why, I thought you said this girl writ this letter to you, and that my lady Wronghead sent it inclosed to my sister?

*Man.* If you please to give me leave, my lord ——the fact is thus—This inclosed letter to lady Grace was a real original one, written by this girl to the count we have been talking of: the count drops it, and my lady Wronghead finds it: then, only changing the cover, she seals it up as a letter of business, just written by herself, to me: and, pretending to be in a hurry, gets this innocent girl to write the direction for her.

*Lord Town.* Oh, then, the girl did not know she was superscribing a billet-doux of her own to you?

*Man.* No, my lord; for when I first question-

ed her about the direction, she owned it immediately; but, when I shewed her that her letter to the count was within it, and told her how it came into my hands, the poor creature was amazed, and thought herself betrayed both by the count and my lady—In short, upon this discovery, the girl and I grew so gracious, that she has let me into some transactions, in my lady Wronghead's family, which, with my having a careful eye over them, may prevent the ruin of it.

*Lord Town.* You are very generous, to be solicitous for a lady that has given you so much uneasiness.

*Man.* But I will be most unmercifully revenged of her; for I will do her the greatest friendship in the world——against her will.

*Lord Town.* What an uncommon philosophy art thou master of, to make even thy malice a virtue!

*Man.* Yet, my lord, I assure you, there is no one action of my life gives me more pleasure than your approbation of it.

*Lord Town.* Dear Charles! my heart's impatient 'till thou art nearer to me! and, as a proof that I have long wished thee so, while your daily conduct has chosen rather to deserve than ask my sister's favour, I have been as secretly industrious to make her sensible of your merit: and since, on this occasion, you have opened your whole heart to me, 'tis now, with equal pleasure, I assure you, we have both succeeded——she is as firmly yours——

*Man.* Impossible! you flatter me!

*Lord Town.* I'm glad you think it flattery: but she herself shall prove it none: she dines with us alone: when the servants are withdrawn, I'll open a conversation, that shall excuse my leaving you together—Oh, Charles! had I, like thee, been cautious in my choice, what melancholy hours had this heart avoided!

*Man.* No more of that, I beg, my lord——

*Lord Town.* But 'twill, at least, be some relief to my anxiety, however barren of content the state has been to me, to see so near a friend and sister happy in it. Your harmony of life will be an instance how much the choice of temper is preferable to beauty.

While your soft hours in mutual kindness move,
You'll reach, by virtue, what I lost by love.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.—MRS MOTHERLY'S *house.*

*Enter* MRS MOTHERLY, *meeting* MYRTILLA.

*Moth.* So, niece! where is it possible you can have been these six hours?

*Myr.* Oh, madam! I have such a terrible story to tell you.

*Moth.* A story! Ods my life! What have you done with the count's note of five hundred pounds, I sent you about? Is it safe? Is it good? Is it security?

*Myr.* Yes, yes, it is safe: but for its goodness ——Mercy on us! I have been in a fair way to be hanged about it!

*Moth.* The dickens! has the rogue of a count played us another trick, then?

*Myr.* You shall hear, madam. When I came to Mr Cash, the banker's, and shewed him his note for five hundred pounds, payable to the count, or order, in two months——he looked earnestly upon it, and desired me to step into the inner room, while he examined his books—after I had stayed about ten minutes, he came in to me—claps to the door, and charges me with a constable for forgery.

*Moth.* Ah, poor soul! and how didst thou get off?

*Myr.* While I was ready to sink in this condition, I begged him to have a little patience, 'till I could send for Mr Manly, whom he knew to be a gentlemen of worth and honour, and who, I was sure, would convince him, whatever fraud might be in the note, that I was myself an innocent abused woman——and, as good luck would have it, in less than half an hour, Mr Manly came—so, without mincing the matter, I fairly told him upon what design the count had lodged that note in your hands, and, in short, laid open the whole scheme he had drawn us into, to make our fortune.

*Moth.* The devil you did!

*Myr.* Why, how do you think it was possible I could any otherwise make Mr Manly my friend, to help me out of the scrape I was in? To conclude, he soon made Mr Cash easy, and sent away the constable: nay, farther, he promised me, if I would trust the note in his hands, he would take care it should be fully paid before it was due, and, at the same time, would give me an ample revenge upon the count; so that, all you have to consider now, madam, is, whether you think yourself safer in the count's hands, or Mr Manly's.

*Moth.* Nay, nay, child; there is no choice in the matter! Mr Manly may be a friend, indeed, if any thing in our power can make him so.

*Myr.* Well, madam, and now, pray, how stand matters at home here? What has the count done with the ladies?

*Moth.* Why, every thing he has a mind to do, by this time, I suppose. He is in high favour with miss, as he is with my lady.

*Myr.* Pray, where are the ladies?

*Moth.* Rattling abroad in their own coach,

and the well-bred count along with them: they have been scouring all the shops in town over, buying fine things and new clothes from morning to night: they have made one voyage already, and have brought home such a cargo of bawbles and trumpery—Mercy on the poor man that's to pay for them!

*Myr.* Did not the young 'squire go with them?

*Moth.* No, no; miss said, truly he would but disgrace their party: so they even left him asleep by the kitchen fire.

*Myr.* Has not he asked after me all this while? for I had a sort of an assignation with him.

*Moth.* Oh, yes; he has been in a bitter taking about it. At last, his disappointment grew so uneasy, that he fairly fell a crying; so, to quiet him, I sent one of the maids and John Moody abroad with him, to shew him the lions, and the monument. Ods me! there he is just come home again—You may have business with him—so I'll even turn you together. [*Exit* MOTH.

*Enter* SQUIRE RICHARD.

*Squire Rich.* Soah, soah, Mrs Myrtilla, where han yaw been aw this day, forsooth?

*Myr.* Nay, if you go to that, 'squire, where have you been, pray?

*Squire Rich.* Why, when I fun' at yow were no loikly to come whoam, I were ready to hong my sel——so John Moody, and I, and one o' your lasses, have been——Lord knows where——a seeing o' the soights.

*Myr.* Well, and pray what have you seen, sir?

*Squire Rich.* Flesh! I cawnt tell, not I—seen every thing, I think. First, there we went o' top o' the what-d'ye-call-it? there, the great huge stone post, up the rawnd and rawnd stairs, that twine and twine about just an as thof it was a cork-screw.

*Myr.* Oh, the monument; well, and was it not a fine sight from the top of it?

*Squire Rich.* Sight, miss! I know no'—I saw nought but smoak and brick housen, and steeple tops———then there was such a mortal ting-tang of bells, and rumbling of carts and coaches; and then the folks under one looked so small, and made such a hum, and a buz, it put me in mind of my mother's great glass bee-hive in our garden in the country.

*Myr.* I think, master, you give a very good account of it.

*Squire Rich.* Ay; but I did not like it: for my head—my head—began to turn—so, I trundled me down stairs agen, like a round trencher.

*Myr.* Well, but this was not all you saw, I suppose?

*Squire Rich.* Noa, noa; we went, after that, and saw the lions, and I liked them better by hawlf; they are pure grim devils; hoh, hoh! I touke a stick, and gave one of them such a poke o' the noase—I believe he would ha' snapt my head off, an he could have got me. Hoh! hoh! hoh!

*Myr.* Well, master, when you and I go abroad, I'll shew you prettier sights than these—there's a masquerade to-morrow.

*Squire Rich.* Oh, laud, ay! they say that's a pure thing for Merry Andrews, and those sort of comical mummers—and the count tells me, that there lads and lasses may jig their tails, and eat, and drink, without grudging, all night lung.

*Myr.* What would you say now, if I should get you a ticket, and go along with you?

*Squire Rich.* Ah, dear!

*Myr.* But have a care, 'squire; the fine ladies there are terribly tempting; look well to your heart, or, ads me! they'll whip it up in the trip of a minute.

*Squire Rich.* Ay, but they cawnt thoa—soa let 'um look to themselves, an' ony of 'um falls in love with me—mayhap they had as good be quiet.

*Myr.* Why, sure you would not refuse a fine lady, would you?

*Squire Rich.* Ay, but I would though, unless it were—one as I know of.

*Myr.* Oh, oh! then you have left your heart in the country, I find!

*Squire Rich.* Noa, noa, my heart—eh—my heart e'nt awt o' this room.

*Myr.* I am glad you have it about you, however.

*Squire Rich.* Nay, mayhap not soa, noather; somebody else may have it, 'at you little think of.

*Myr.* I can't imagine what you mean!

*Squire Rich.* Noa! why doan't you know how many folks there is in this room, naw?

*Myr.* Very fine, master; I see you have learnt the town gallantry already.

*Squire Rich.* Why, doan't you believe 'at I have a kindness for you, then?

*Myr.* Fy, fy, master, how you talk! beside, you are too young to think of a wife.

*Squire Rich.* Ay! but I caunt help thinking o' you, for all that.

*Myr.* How! why sure, sir, you don't pretend to think of me in a dishonourable way?

*Squire Rich.* Nay, that's as you see good—I did no' think 'at you would ha' thowght of me for a husband, mayhap; unless I had means in my own hands; and feyther allows me but haulf a crown a-week, as yet awhile.

*Myr.* Oh, when I like any body, 'tis not want of money will make me refuse them.

*Squire Rich.* Well, that's just my mind now; for an I like a girl, miss, I would take her in her smock.

*Myr.* Ay, master, now you speak like a man of honour; this shews something of a true heart in you.

*Squire Rich.* Ay, and a true heart you'll find me, try when you will.

*Myr.* Hush, hush, here's your papa come home, and my aunt with him.

*Squire Rich.* A devil rive 'em! what do they come naw for?

*Myr.* When you and I get to the masquerade, you shall see what I'll say to you.

*Squire Rich.* Well, hands upon't, then—

*Myr.* There—

*Squire Rich.* One buss, and a bargain. [*Kisses her.*] Ads wauntlikins! as soft and plump as a marrow-pudding. [*Exeunt severally.*

*Enter* SIR FRANCIS WRONGHEAD, *and* MRS MOTHERLY.

*Sir Fran.* What! my wife and daughter abroad, say you?

*Moth.* Oh, dear sir, they have been mighty busy all the day long; they just came home to snap up a short dinner, and so went out again.

*Sir Fran.* Well, well; I shan't stay supper for them, I can tell them that: for, ods-heart, I have nothing in me but a toast and tankard since morning.

*Moth.* I am afraid, sir, these late parliament hours won't agree with you.

*Sir Fran.* Why, truly, Mrs Motherly, they don't do right with us country gentlemen; to lose one meal out of three, is a hard tax upon a good stomach.

*Moth.* It is so, indeed, sir.

*Sir Fran.* But howsomever, Mrs Motherly, when we consider, that what we suffer is for the good of our country———

*Moth.* Why, truly, sir, that is something.

*Sir Fran.* Oh, there's a great deal to be said for't—the good of one's country is above all things—A true-hearted Englishman thinks nothing too much for it—I have heard of some honest gentlemen so very zealous, that, for the good of their country—they would sometimes go to dinner at midnight.

*Moth.* Oh, that goodness of them! sure their country must have a vast esteem for them!

*Sir Fran.* So they have, Mrs Motherly; they are so respected when they come home to their boroughs after a session, and so beloved—that their country will come and dine with them every day in the week.

*Moth.* Dear me! What a fine thing 'tis to be so populous!

*Sir Fran.* It is a great comfort, indeed! and, I can assure you, you are a good sensible woman, Mrs Motherly.

*Moth.* Oh, dear sir, your honour's pleased to compliment!

*Sir Fran.* No, no; I see you know how to value people of consequence.

*Moth.* Good lack! here's company, sir. Will you give me leave to get you a little something till the ladies come home, sir?

*Sir Fran.* Why, troth, I don't think it would be amiss.

*Moth.* It shall be done in a moment, sir. [*Exit* MOTHERLY.

*Enter* MANLY.

*Man.* Sir Francis, your servant.

*Sir Fran.* Cousin Manly!

*Man.* I am come to see how the family goes on here.

*Sir Fran.* Troth! all as busy as bees. I have been upon the wing ever since eight o'clock this morning!

*Man.* By your early hour, then, I suppose you have been making your court to some of the great men.

*Sir Fran.* Why, faith! you have hit it, sir——I was advised to lose no time: so I went e'en straight forward to one great man I had never seen in my life before.

*Man.* Right! that was doing business: but who had you got to introduce you?

*Sir Fran.* Why, nobody——I remember I had heard a wise man say—My son, be bold—so, troth, I introduced myself!

*Man.* As how, pray?

*Sir Fran.* Why, thus—Look ye———Please your lordship, says I, I am sir Francis Wrongheaded, of Bumper-hall, and member of parliament for the borough of Guzzledown———Sir, your humble servant, says my lord; thof I have not the honour to know your person, I have heard you are a very honest gentleman, and I am glad your borough has made choice of so worthy a representative; and so, says he, Sir Francis, have you any service to command me? Naw, cousin, those last words, you may be sure, gave me no small encouragement. And thof I know, sir, you have no extraordinary opinion of my parts, yet, I believe, you won't say I mist it naw!

*Man.* Well, I hope I shall have no cause.

*Sir Fran.* So, when I found him so courteous—My lord, says I, I did not think to ha' troubled your lordship with business upon my first visit; but, since your lordship is pleased not to stand upon ceremony,—why truly, says I, I think naw is as good as another time.

*Man.* Right! there you pushed him home.

*Sir Fran.* Ay, ay; I had a mind to let him see that I was none of your mealy-mouthed ones.

*Man.* Very good.

*Sir Fran.* So, in short, my lord, says I, I have a good estate——but—a—it's a little awt at elbows: and, as I desire to serve my king, as well as my country, I shall be very willing to accept of a place at court.

*Man.* So, this was making short work on't.

*Sir Fran.* I'cod! I shot him flying, cousin! some of your hawf-witted ones, naw, would ha' hummed and hawed, and dangled a month or two after him, before they durst open their mouths about a place, and, mayhap, not ha' got it at last neither.

*Man.* Oh, I'm glad you're so sure on't—

*Sir Fran.* You shall hear, cousin—Sir Francis, says my lord, pray what sort of a place may you ha' turned your thoughts upon? My lord, says I, beggars must not be chusers; but ony place, says I, about ■ thousand a-year, will be well enough to be doing with, till something better falls in—for I thowght it would not look well to stond haggling with him at first.

*Man.* No, no; your business was to get footing any way.

*Sir Fran.* Right! there's it! Ay, cousin, I see you know the world.

*Man.* Yes, yes; one sees more of it every day———Well, but what said my lord to all this?

*Sir Fran.* Sir Francis, says he, I shall be glad to serve you any way that lies in my power; so he gave me a squeeze by the hand, as much as to say, give yourself no trouble———I'll do your business. With that he turned him abawt to somebody with a coloured ribbon across here, that looked in my thoughts, as if he came for a place, too.

*Man.* Ha! ha! so, upon these hopes, you are to make your fortune!

*Sir Fran.* Why! do you think there's any doubt of it, sir?

*Man.* Oh, no; I have not the least doubt about it—for, just as you have done, I made my fortune ten years ago.

*Sir Fran.* Why, I never knew you had a place, cousin!

*Man.* Nor I, neither, upon my faith, cousin. But you, perhaps, may have better fortune: for I suppose my lord has heard of what importance you were in the debate to-day——You have been since down at the house, I presume?

*Sir Fran.* Oh, yes! I would not neglect the house for ever so much.

*Man.* Well, and pray what have they done there?

*Sir Fran.* Why, troth, I can't well tell you what they have done; but I can tell you what I did: and I think pretty well in the main; only I happened to make a little mistake at last, indeed.

*Man.* How was that?

*Sir Fran.* Why, they were all got there into a sort of a puzzling debate about the good of the nation—and I were always for that, you know—but, in short, the arguments were so long-winded on both sides, that, waunds! I did not well understand 'um: hawsomever, I was convinced, and so resolved to vote right, according to my conscience——so, when they came to put the question, as they call it,—I don't know haw 'twas—but I doubt I cried Ay! when I should ha' cried No!

*Man.* How came that about?

*Sir Fran.* Why, by a mistake, as I tell you—for there was a good-humoured sort of a gentleman, one Mr Totherside, I think they call him, that sat next me, as soon as I had cried Ay, gives me a hearty shake by the hand. Sir, says he, you are a man of honour, and a true Englishman! and I should be proud to be better acquainted with you—and so, with that, he takes me by the sleeve along with the crowd into the lobby—so, I knew nowght—but, ods flesh! I was got o' the wrung side the post, for I were told afterwards I should have staid where I was.

*Man.* And so, if you had not quite made your fortune before, you have clinched it now!—Ah thou head of the Wrongheads! [*Aside.*

*Sir Fran.* Odso! here's my lady come home at last—I hope, cousin, you will be so kind as to take a family supper with us?

*Man.* Another time, Sir Francis; but to-night I am engaged.

*Enter* LADY WRONGHEAD, MISS JENNY, *and* COUNT BASSET.

*Lady Wrong.* Cousin, your servant; I hope you will pardon my rudeness; but we have really been in such a continual hurry here, that we have not had a leisure moment to return your last visit.

*Man.* Oh, madam, I am a man of no ceremony; you see that has not hindered my coming again.

*Lady Wrong.* You are infinitely obliging; but I'll redeem my credit with you.

*Man.* At your own time, madam.

*Count Bas.* I must say that for Mr Manly, madam, if making people easy is the rule of good-breeding, he is certainly the best-bred man in the world.

*Man.* Soh! I am not to drop my acquaintance, I find—[*Aside.*] I am afraid, sir, I shall grow vain upon your good opinion.

*Count Bas.* I don't know that, sir; but I am sure what you are pleased to say makes me so.

*Man.* The most impudent modesty that ever I met with! [*Aside.*

*Lady Wrong.* Lard! how ready his wit is! [*Aside.*

*Sir Fran.* Don't you think, sir, the count's a very fine gentleman? [*Apart.*

*Man.* Oh, among the ladies, certainly. [*Apart.*

*Sir Fran.* And yet he's as stout as a lion. Waund, he'll storm any thing! [*Apart.*

*Man.* Will he so? why, then, sir, take care of your citadel. [*Apart.*

*Sir Fran.* Ah, you are a wag, cousin! [*Apart.*

*Man.* I hope, ladies, the town air continues to agree with you?

*Jenny.* Oh, perfectly well, sir! We have been abroad in our new coach all day long——and we have bought an ocean of fine things. And to-morrow we go to the masquerade; and on Friday to the play; and on Saturday to the opera; and on Sunday we are to be at the what-d'ye-call-it———assembly, and see the ladies play at quad-

rille, and piquet, and ombre, and hazard, and basset; and on Monday we are to see the king; and so on Tuesday——

*Lady Wrong.* Hold, hold, miss! You must not let your tongue run so fast, child—you forget; you know I brought you hither to learn modesty.

*Man.* Yes, yes! and she is improved with a vengeance—— [*Aside.*

*Jenny.* Lawrd! Mamma, I am sure I did not say any harm; and, if one must not speak in one's turn, one may be kept under as long as one lives, for aught I see.

*Lady Wrong.* O' my conscience, this girl grows so headstrong——

*Sir Fran.* Ay, ay; there's your fine growing spirit for you! Now, tack it down an' you can.

*Jenny.* All I said, papa, was only to entertain my cousin Manly.

*Man.* My pretty dear, I am mightily obliged to you!

*Jenny.* Look you there, now, madam.

*Lady Wrong.* Hold your tongue, I say.

*Jenny.* [*Turning away, and glowting.*]—I declare it, I won't bear it: she is always snubbing me before you, sir! I know why she does it, well enough——— [*Aside to the* COUNT.

*Count Bas.* Hush, hush, my dear! Don't be uneasy at that; she'll suspect us. [*Aside.*

*Jenny.* Let her suspect; what do I care——I don't know but I have as much reason to suspect as she——though, perhaps, I am not so afraid of her.

*Count Bas.* [*Aside.*]—'Egad, if I don't keep a tight hand on my tit, here, she'll run away with my project before I can bring it to bear.

*Lady Wrong.* [*Aside.*]—Perpetually hanging upon him! The young harlot is certainly in love with him; but I must not let them see I think so—and yet I cannot bear it. Upon my life, count, you'll spoil that forward girl—you should not encourage her so.

*Count Bas.* Pardon me, madam; I was only advising her to observe what your ladyship said to her.

*Man.* Yes, truly, her observations have been something particular. [*Aside.*

*Count Bas.* In one word, madam, she has a jealousy of your ladyship, and I am forced to encourage her, to blind it; 'twill be better to take no notice of her behaviour to me. [*Apart.*

*Lady Wrong.* You are right; I will be more cautious. [*Apart.*

*Count Bas.* To-morrow, at the masquerade, we may lose her. [*Apart.*

*Lady Wrong.* We shall be observed; I'll send you a note, and settle that affair—go on with the girl, and don't mind me. [*Apart.*

*Count Bas.* I have been taking your part, my little angel.

*Lady Wrong.* Jenny! Come hither, child—You must not be so hasty, my dear—I only advise you for your good.

*Jenny.* Yes, mamma; but when I am told of a thing before company, it always makes me worse, you know.

*Man.* If I have any skill in the fair sex, miss and her mamma have only quarrelled, because they are both of a mind. This facetious count seems to have made a very genteel step into the family. [*Aside.*

*Enter* MYRTILLA. MANLY *talks apart with her.*

*Lady Wrong.* Well, sir Francis, and what news have you brought us from Westminster to-day?

*Sir Fran.* News, madam, I'cod! I have some ——and such as does not come every day, I can tell you—a word in your ear—I have got a promise of a place at court of a thousand pawnd a-year already.

*Lady Wrong.* Have you so, sir? And pray who may you thank for't? Now! Who is in the right? Is not this better than throwing so much away after a stinking pack of fox-hounds in the country? Now your family may be the better for it.

*Sir Fran.* Nay, that's what persuaded me to come up, my dove!

*Lady Wrong.* Mighty well—come—let me have another hundred pound, then.

*Sir Fran.* Another! child? waunds! you have had one hundred this morning; pray what's become of that, my dear?

*Lady Wrong.* What's become of it? Why, I'll shew you, my love: Jenny, have you the bills about you?

*Jenny.* Yes, mamma.

*Lady Wrong.* What's become of it? Why, laid out, my dear, with fifty more to it, that I was forced to borrow of the count, here.

*Jenny.* Yes, indeed, papa; and that would hardly do, neither——There's the account.

*Sir Fran.* [*Turning over the bills.*]—Let's see! Let's see! What the devil have we got here?

*Man.* Then you have sounded your aunt, you say, and she readily comes into all I proposed to you? [*Apart.*

*Myr.* Sir, I'll answer, with my life, she is most thankfully yours, in every article. She mightily desires to see you, sir. [*Apart.*

*Man.* I am going home directly; bring her to my house in half an hour; and, if she makes good what you tell me, you shall both find your account in it. [*Apart.*

*Myr.* Sir, she shall not fail you. [*Apart.*

*Sir Fran.* Od's-life! Madam, here's nothing but toys, and trinkets, and fans, and clock stockings, by wholesale!

*Lady Wrong.* There's nothing but what's proper, and for your credit, sir Francis—Nay, you see I am so good a housewife, that, in necessaries for myself, I have scarce laid out a shilling.

*Sir Fran.* No, by my troth, so it seems! for the devil o' one thing's here, that I can see you have any occasion for.

*Lady Wrong.* My dear, do you think I came hither to live out of the fashion? Why, the greatest distinction of a fine lady, in this town, is in the variety of pretty things that she has no occasion for.

*Jenny.* Sure, papa, could you imagine that women of quality wanted nothing but stays and petticoats?

*Lady Wrong.* Now, that is so like him!

*Man.* So, the family comes on finely. [*Aside.*

*Lady Wrong.* Lard, if men were always to govern, what dowdies they would reduce their wives to!

*Sir Fran.* An hundred pound in the morning, and want another afore night! Waunds and fire! The lord mayor of London could not hold at this rate!

*Man.* Oh, do you feel it, sir! [*Aside.*

*Lady Wrong.* My dear, you seem uneasy; let me have the hundred pound, and compose yourself.

*Sir Fran.* Compose the devil, madam! Why, do you consider what a hundred pound a-day comes to in a year?

*Lady Wrong.* My life! if I account with you from one day to another, that's really all my head is able to bear at a time—But I'll tell you what, I consider—I consider that my advice has got you a thousand pound a-year this morning—— That, now, methinks, you might consider, sir.

*Sir Fran.* A thousand a-year! Waunds, madam, but I have not touched a penny of it yet.

*Man.* Nor ever will, I'll answer for him. [*Aside.*

*Enter* SQUIRE RICHARD.

*Squire Rich.* Feyther, an you doan't come quickly, the meat will be cooled: and I'd fain pick a bit with you.

*Lady Wrong.* Bless me, sir Francis! You are not going to sup by yourself?

*Sir Fran.* No, but I'm going to dine by myself, and that's pretty near the matter, madam.

*Lady Wrong.* Had not you as good stay a little, my dear? We shall all eat in half an hour; and I was thinking to ask my cousin Manly to take a family morsel with us.

*Sir Fran.* Nay, for my cousin's good company, I don't care if I ride a day's journey without baiting.

*Man.* By no means, sir Francis. I am going upon a little business.

*Sir Fran.* Well, sir; I know you don't love compliments.

*Man.* You'll excuse me, madam——

*Lady Wrong.* Since you have business, sir— [*Exit* MANLY.

*Enter* MRS MOTHERLY.

Oh, Mrs Motherly! You were saying this morning you had some very fine lace to shew me—— Cannot I see it now?

[SIR FRANCIS *stares.*

*Moth.* Why, really, madam, I had made a sort of a promise to let the countess of Nicely have the birth sight of it for the first day: but your ladyship——

*Lady Wrong.* Oh! I die if I don't see it before her!

*Squire Rich.* Woan't you go, feyther? [*Apart.*

*Sir Fran.* Waunds, lad! I shall ha' noa stomach at this rate. [*Apart.*

*Moth.* Well, madam, though I say it, 'tis the sweetest pattern that ever came over—and for fineness—no cobweb comes up to it!

*Sir Fran.* Ods guts and gizzard, madam! Lace as fine as a cobweb! Why, what the devil's that to cost, now?

*Moth.* Nay, if sir Francis does not like it, madam——

*Lady Wrong.* He like it! Dear Mrs Motherly, he is not to wear it.

*Sir Fran.* Flesh, madam! But I suppose I am to pay for it?

*Lady Wrong.* No doubt on't! Think of your thousand a-year, and who got it you; go! eat your dinner, and be thankful, go!—[*Driving him to the door.*]—Come, Mrs Motherly.

[*Exit* LADY WRONGHEAD *with* MRS MOTHERLY.

*Sir Fran.* Very fine! So, here I mun fast, till I am almost famished, for the good of my country, while madam is laying me out an hundred pound a-day in lace as fine as a cobweb, for the honour of my family! Ods flesh! Things had need go well at this rate!

*Squire Rich.* Nay, nay—Come, feyther.

[*Exeunt* SIR FRANCIS *and* SQUIRE RICHARD.

*Enter* MRS MOTHERLY.

*Moth.* Madam, my lady desires you and the count will please to come and assist her fancy in some of the new laces.

*Count Bas.* We'll wait upon her—— [*Exit* MRS MOTHERLY.

*Jenny.* So, I told you how it was! You see she cannot bear to leave us together.

*Count Bas.* No matter, my dear: you know she has asked me to stay supper: so, when your papa and she are a-bed, Mrs Myrtilla will let me into the house again; then you may steal into her chamber, and we'll have a pretty sneaker of punch together.

*Myr.* Ay, ay, madam; you may command me in any thing.

*Jenny.* Well, that will be pure!

*Count Bas.* But you had best go to her alone, my life: it will look better if I come after you.

*Jenny.* Ay, so it will: and to-morrow you know at the masquerade—and then!

SONG.

*Oh, I'll have a husband! aye, marry;*
*For why should I longer tarry,*
*For why should I longer tarry,*
*Than other brisk girls have done?*
*For if I stay till I grow grey,*
*They'll call me old maid, and fusty old jade;*
*So I'll no longer tarry;*
*But I'll have a husband, aye, marry,*
*If money can buy me one.*

*My mother, she says, I'm too coming;*
*And still in my ears she is drumming,*
*And still in my ears she is drumming,*
*That I such vain thoughts should shun.*
*My sisters they cry, oh, fy! and, oh, fy!*
*But yet I can see, they're as coming as me;*
*So let me have husbands in plenty:*
*I'd rather have twenty times twenty,*
*Than die an old maid undone.* [Exit.

*Myr.* So, sir, am not I very commode to you?

*Count Bas.* Well, child, and don't you find your account in it? Did I not tell you we might still be of use to one another?

*Myr.* Well, but how stands your affair with miss in the main?

*Count Bas.* Oh, she's mad for the masquerade! It drives like a nail; we want nothing now but a parson to clinch it. Did not your aunt say she could get one at a short warning?

*Myr.* Yes, yes; my lord Townly's chaplain is her cousin, you know; he'll do your business and mine, at the same time.

*Count Bas.* Oh, 'tis true! but where shall we appoint him?

*Myr.* Why, you know my lady Townly's house is always open to the masks upon a ball-night, before they go to the Hay-market.

*Count Bas.* Good.

*Myr.* Now, the doctor purposes we should all come thither in our habits, and, when the rooms are full, we may steal up into his chamber, he says, and there——crack———he'll give us all canonical commission to go to-bed together.

*Count Bas.* Admirable! Well, the devil fetch me, if I shall not be heartily glad to see thee well settled, child!

*Myr.* And may the black gentleman tuck me under his arm at the same time, if I shall not think myself obliged to you as long as I live!

*Count Bas.* One kiss for old acquaintance sake—Egad, I shall want to be busy again.

*Myr.* Oh, you'll have one shortly will find you employment: but I must run to my 'squire.

*Count Bas.* And I to the ladies—so your humble servant, sweet Mrs Wronghead!

*Myr.* Yours, as in duty bound, most noble count Basset. [*Exit* MYR.

*Count Bas.* Why, ay! count! That title has been of some use to me, indeed; not that I have any more pretence to it, than I have to a blue ribband. Yet, I have made a pretty considerable figure in life with it. I have lolled in my own chariot, dealt at assemblies, dined with ambassadors, and made one at quadrille with the first women of quality—But—*tempora mutantur;* since that damned squadron at White's have left me out of their last secret, I am reduced to trade upon my own stock of industry, and make my last push upon a wife. If my card comes up right (which, I think, cannot fail) I shall once more cut a figure, and cock my hat in the face of the best of them: for, since our modern men of fortune are grown wise enough to be sharpers, I think sharpers are fools that don't take up the airs of men of quality. [*Exit.*

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—LORD TOWNLY'S *house.*

*Enter* MANLY *and* LADY GRACE.

*Man.* THERE'S something, madam, hangs upon your mind to-day: is it unfit to trust me with it?

*Lady Grace.* Since you will know—my sister, then—unhappy woman!

*Man.* What of her?

*Lady Grace.* I fear is on the brink of ruin.

*Man.* I am sorry for it——What has happened?

*Lady Grace.* Nothing so very new; but the continual repetition of it at last has raised my brother to an intemperance that I tremble at.

*Man.* Have they had any words upon it?

*Lady Grace.* He has not seen her since yesterday.

*Man.* What! not at home all night?

*Lady Grace.* About five this morning, in she came; but, with such looks, and such an equipage of misfortune at her heels—What can become of her?

*Man.* Has not my lord seen her, say you?

*Lady Grace.* No; he changed his bed last night—I sat with him alone till twelve, in expectation of her: but when the clock struck, he started from his chair, and grew incensed to that degree, that, had I not, almost on my knees, dissuaded him, he had ordered the doors, that instant, to have been locked against her.

*Man.* How terrible is his situation, when the most justifiable severities he can use against her

are liable to the mirth of all the dissolute card-tables in town!

*Lady Grace.* 'Tis that, I know, has made him bear so long: but you that feel for him, Mr Manly, will assist him to support his honour, and, if possible, preserve his quiet; therefore, I beg you, don't leave the house, till one or both of them can be wrought to better temper.

*Man.* How amiable is this concern in you!

*Lady Grace.* For Heaven's sake, don't mind me; but think on something to preserve us all!

*Man.* I shall not take the merit of obeying your commands, madam, to serve my lord—But, pray, madam, let me into all that has past since yesternight.

*Lady Grace.* When my intreaties had prevailed upon my lord, not to make a story for the town, by so public a violence, as shutting her at once out of his doors, he ordered an apartment next to my lady's to be made ready for him—— While that was doing, I tried, by all the little arts I was mistress of, to amuse him into temper; in short, a silent grief was all I could reduce him to. On this, we took our leaves, and parted to our repose: what his was, I imagine by my own; for I ne'er closed my eyes. About five, as I told you, I heard my lady at the door; so I slipped on a gown, and sat almost an hour with her in her own chamber.

*Man.* What said she, when she did not find my lord there?

*Lady Grace.* Oh! so far from being shocked, or alarmed at it, that she blessed the occasion; and said, that, in her condition, the chat of a female friend was far preferable to the best husband's company in the world.

*Man.* Where has she the spirits to support so much insensibility?

*Lady Grace.* Nay, 'tis incredible; for, though she had lost every thing she had in the world, and stretched her credit even to breaking, she rallied her own follies with such vivacity, and painted the penance she knows she must undergo for them in such ridiculous lights, that had not my concern for a brother been too strong for her wit, she had almost disarmed my anger.

*Man.* Her mind may have another cast by this time: the most flagrant dispositions have their hours of anguish, which their pride conceals from company. But pray, madam, how could she avoid coming down to dine?

*Lady Grace.* Oh! she took care of that before she went to bed, by ordering her woman, whenever she was asked for, to say she was not well.

*Man.* You have seen her since she was up, I presume?

*Lady Grace.* Up! I question whether she be awake yet.

*Man.* Terrible! what a figure does she make now! That nature should throw away so much beauty upon a creature, to make such a slatternly use of it!

*Lady Grace.* Oh, fy! there is not a more elegant beauty in town, when she is dressed.

*Man.* In my eye, madam, she that's early dressed has ten times her elegance.

*Lady Grace.* But she won't be long now, I believe; for, I think, I see her chocolate going up—Mrs Trusty—a-hem!

MRS TRUSTY *comes to the door.*

*Man.* [*Aside.*] Five o'clock in the afternoon for a lady of quality's breakfast, is an elegant hour, indeed! which, to shew her more polite way of living, too, I presume she eats in her bed.

*Lady Grace.* [*To* MRS TRUSTY.] And when she is up, I would be glad she would let me come to her toilet—That's all, Mrs Trusty.

*Trusty.* I will be sure to let her ladyship know, madam. [*Exit.*

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* Sir Francis Wronghead, sir, desires to speak with you.

*Man.* He comes unseasonably—What shall I do with him?

*Lady Grace.* Oh, see him, by all means! we shall have time enough; in the mean while, I'll step in, and have an eye upon my brother. Nay, don't mind me——you have business———

*Man.* You must be obeyed———

[*Retreating, while* LADY GRACE *goes out.* Desire sir Francis to walk in—[*Exit Servant.*] I suppose, by this time, his wise worship begins to find, that the balance of his journey to London is on the wrong side.

*Enter* SIR FRANCIS WRONGHEAD.

Sir Francis, your servant. How came I by the favour of this extraordinary visit?

*Sir Fran.* Ah, cousin!

*Man.* Why that sorrowful face, man?

*Sir Fran.* I have no friend alive but you—

*Man.* I am sorry for that——But what's the matter?

*Sir Fran.* I have played the fool by this journey, I see now———for my bitter wife———

*Man.* What of her?

*Sir Fran.* Is playing the devil!

*Man.* Why, truly, that's a part that most of your fine ladies begin with, as soon as they get to London.

*Sir Fran.* If I'm a living man, cousin, she has made away with above two hundred and fifty pounds since yesterday morning!

*Man.* Ha! I see a good housewife will do a great deal of work in a little time.

*Sir Fran.* Work, do they call it? Fine work, indeed!

*Man.* Well, but how do you mean made away

with it? What, she has laid it out, may be—but I suppose you have an account of it?

*Sir Fran.* Yes, yes, I have had the account, indeed; but I mun needs say, it's a very sorry one.

*Man.* Pray, let's hear?

*Sir Fran.* Why, first, I let her have an hundred and fifty, to get things handsome about her, to let the world see that I was somebody; and I thought that sum was very genteel.

*Man.* Indeed, I think so; and, in the country, might have served her a twelvemonth.

*Sir Fran.* Why, so it might——but here, in this fine town, forsooth, it could not get through four-and-twenty hours—for, in half that time, it was all squandered away in bawbles, and new-fashioned trumpery.

*Man.* Oh! for ladies in London, sir Francis, all this might be necessary.

*Sir Fran.* Noa, there's the plague on't; the devil o' one useful thing do I see for it, but two pair of laced shoes, and those stond me in three pounds three shillings a pair, too.

*Man.* Dear sir, this is nothing! Why we have city wives here, that, while their good man is selling three pennyworth of sugar, will give you twenty pounds for a short apron.

*Sir Fran.* Mercy on us, what a mortal poor devil is a husband!

*Man.* Well, but I hope you have nothing else to complain of?

*Sir Fran.* Ah, would I could say so, too!—— but there's another hundred behind yet, that goes more to my heart than all that went before it.

*Man.* And how might that be disposed of?

*Sir Fran.* Troth, I am almost ashamed to tell you.

*Man.* Out with it.

*Sir Fran.* Why, she has been at an assembly.

*Man.* What, since I saw you! I thought you had all supped at home last night.

*Sir Fran.* Why, so we did———and all as merry as grigs—I'cod, my heart was so open, that I tossed another hundred into her apron, to go out early this morning with———But the cloth was no sooner taken away, than in comes my lady Townly here, (who, between you and I ---mum---has had the devil to pay yonder) with another rantipole dame of quality, and out they must have her, they said, to introduce her at my lady Noble's assembly, forsooth———A few words, you may be sure, made the bargain---so, bawnce! and away they drive, as if the devil had got into the coach-box---so, about four or five in the morning-----home comes madam, with her eyes a foot deep in her head---and my poor hundred pounds left behind her at the hazard-table!

*Man.* All lost at dice!

*Sir Fran.* Every shilling---among a parcel of pigtail puppies, and pale-faced women of quality.

*Man.* But pray, sir Francis, how came you, after you found her so ill an housewife of one sum, so soon to trust her with another?

*Sir Fran.* Why, truly, I mun say that was partly my own fault; for, if I had not been a blab of my tongue, I believe that last hundred might have been saved.

*Man.* How so?

*Sir Fran.* Why, like an owl as I was, out of good-will, forsooth, partly to keep her in humour, I must needs tell her of the thousand pounds a-year I had just got the promise of—I'cod, she lays her claws upon it that moment—said it was all owing to her advice, and truly she would have her share on't.

*Man.* What, before you had it yourself?

*Sir Fran.* Why, ay; that's what I told her--- My dear, said I, mayhap I may'nt receive the first quarter on't this half year.

*Man.* Sir Francis, I have heard you with a great deal of patience, and I really feel compassion for you.

*Sir Fran.* Truly, and well you may, cousin; for I don't see that my wife's goodness is a bit the better for bringing to London.

*Man.* If you remember, I gave you a hint of it.

*Sir Fran.* Why, ay, it's true, you did so: but the devil himself could not have believed she would have rid post to him.

*Man.* Sir, if you stay but a fortnight in this town, you will every day see hundreds as fast upon the gallop as she is.

*Sir Fran.* Ah, this London is a base place, indeed!—Waunds! if things should happen to go wrong with me at Westminster, at this rate, how the devil shall I keep out of a jail?

*Man.* Why, truly, there seems to me but one way to avoid it.

*Sir Fran.* Ah, would you could tell me that, cousin!

*Man.* The way lies plain before you, sir; the same road, that brought you hither, will carry you safe home again.

*Sir Fran.* Ods-flesh, cousin! what! and leave a thousand pounds a-year behind me?

*Man.* Pooh, pooh! leave any thing behind you, but your family, and you are a saver by it.

*Sir Fran.* Ay, but consider, cousin, what a scurvy figure shall I make in the country, if I come a-wn withawt it.

*Man.* You will make a much more lamentable figure in a jail without it.

*Sir Fran.* Mayhap 'at yow have no great opinion of it then, cousin?

*Man.* Sir Francis, to do you the service of a real friend, I must speak very plainly to you: you don't yet see half the ruin that's before you.

*Sir Fran.* Good-lack! how may you mean, cousin?

*Man.* In one word, your whole affairs stand thus---In a week, you'll lose your seat at Westminster: in a fortnight, my lady will run you into jail, by keeping the best company———In four-and-twenty hours, your daughter will run away with a sharper, because she han't been used to better company: and your son will steal into marriage with a cast mistress, because he has not been used to any company at all.

*Sir Fran.* I' th' name o' goodness, why should you think all this?

*Man.* Because I have proof of it; in short, I know so much of their secrets, that if all this is not prevented to-night, it will be out of your power to do it to-morrow morning.

*Sir Fran.* Mercy upon us! you frighten me---Well, sir, I will be governed by you: but what am I to do in this case?

*Man.* I have not time here to give you proper instructions; but about eight this evening I'll call at your lodgings, and there you shall have full conviction how much I have it at heart to serve you.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* Sir, my lord desires to speak with you.

*Man.* I'll wait upon him.

*Sir Fran.* Well, then, I'll go strait home, naw.

*Man.* At eight depend upon me.

*Sir Fran.* Ah, dear cousin! I shall be bound to you as long as I live. Mercy deliver us, what a terrible journey have I made on't!

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*Opens to a dressing-room.*

LADY TOWNLY, *as just up, walks to her toilet, leaning on* MRS TRUSTY.

*Trusty.* Dear madam, what should make your ladyship so out of order?

*Lady Town.* How is it possible to be well, where one is killed for want of sleep?

*Trusty.* Dear me! it was so long before you rung, madam, I was in hopes your ladyship had been finely composed.

*Lady Town.* Composed! why I have lain in an inn here; this house is worse than an inn with ten stage-coaches: what between my lord's impertinent people of business in a morning, and the intolerable thick shoes of footmen at noon, one has not a wink all night.

*Trusty.* Indeed, madam, it's a great pity my lord can't be persuaded into the hours of people of quality—though I must say that, madam, your ladyship is certainly the best matrimonial manager in town.

*Lady Town.* Oh, you are quite mistaken, Trusty! I manage very ill; for, notwithstanding all the power I have, by never being over-fond of my lord--yet I want money infinitely oftener than he is willing to give it me.

*Trusty.* Ah! if his lordship could but be brought to play himself, madam, then he might feel what it is to want money.

*Lady Town.* Oh, don't talk of it! do you know that I am undone, Trusty?

*Trusty.* Mercy forbid, madam!

*Lady Town.* Broke, ruined, plundered!——stripped, even to a confiscation of my last guinea!

*Trusty.* You don't tell me so, madam?

*Lady Town.* And where to raise ten pound in the world—What is to be done, Trusty?

*Trusty.* Truly, I wish I were wise enough to tell you, madam: but may be your ladyship may have a run of better fortune upon some of the good company that comes here to-night.

*Lady Town.* But I have not a single guinea to try my fortune.

*Trusty.* Ha! that's a bad business indeed, madam—Adad, I have a thought in my head, madam, if it is not too late——

*Lady Town.* Out with it quickly, then, I beseech thee.

*Trusty.* Has not the steward something of fifty pounds, madam, that you left in his hands to pay somebody about this time?

*Lady Town.* Oh, ay; I had forgot—'twas to—a—what's his filthy name?

*Trusty.* Now I remember, madam, 'twas to Mr Lutestring, your old mercer, that your ladyship turned off about a year ago, because he would trust you no longer.

*Lady Town.* The very wretch! If he has not paid it, run quickly, dear Trusty, and bid him bring it hither immediately—[*Exit* TRUSTY.] Well, sure mortal woman never had such fortune! five, five and nine, against poor seven for ever——No, after that horrid bar of my chance, that lady Wronghead's fatal red fist upon the table, I saw it was impossible ever to win another stake——Sit up all night; lose all one's money; dream of winning thousands; wake without a shilling; and then——How like a hag I look! In short—the pleasures of life are not worth this disorder. If it were not for shame, now, I could almost think lady Grace's sober scheme not quite so ridiculous——If my wise lord could but hold his tongue for a week, 'tis odds but I should hate the town in a fortnight——But I will not be driven out of it, that's positive.

TRUSTY *returns.*

*Trusty.* Oh, madam, there's no bearing of it! Mr Lutestring was just let in at the door, as I came to the stair foot; and the steward is now actually paying him the money in the hall.

*Lady Town.* Run to the stair-case head again --and scream to him, that I must speak with him this instant. [TRUSTY *runs out, and speaks.*

*Trusty.* Mr Poundage——a-hem! Mr Poundage, a word with you quickly! [*Without.*

*Pound.* [*Within.*] I'll come to you presently. [*Without.*

*Trusty.* Presently won't do, man, you must come this minute. [*Without.*

*Pound.* I am but just paying a little money here. [*Without.*

*Trusty.* Cods my life, paying money! Is the man distracted? Come here, I tell you, to my lady this moment; quick! [*Without.*

TRUSTY *returns.*

*Lady Town.* Will the monster come or no?—

*Trusty.* Yes, I hear him now, madam; he is hobbling up as fast as he can.

*Lady Town.* Don't let him come in—for he will keep such a babbling about his accounts—my brain is not able to bear him.

POUNDAGE *comes to the door, with a money-bag in his hand.*

*Trusty.* Oh, it's well you are come, sir! where's the fifty pounds?

*Pound.* Why, here it is; if you had not been in such haste, I should have paid it by this time—the man's now writing a receipt, below, for it.

*Trusty.* No matter; my lady says you must not pay him with that money! there's not enough, it seems; there's a pistole, and a guinea, that is not good, in it——besides, there is a mistake in the account, too—[*Twitches the bag from him.*] But she is not at leisure to examine it now; so you must bid Mr What-d'ye-call-um call another time.

*Lady Town.* What is all that noise there?

*Pound.* Why, an it please your ladyship—

*Lady Town.* Prithee, don't plague me now; but do as you were ordered.

*Pound.* Nay, what your ladyship pleases, madam—— [*Exit* POUNDAGE.

*Trusty.* There they are, madam—[*Pours the money out of the bag.*]—The pretty things were so near falling into a nasty tradesman's hand, I protest it made me tremble for them—I fancy your ladyship had as good give me that bad guinea, for luck's sake—Thank you, madam.

[*Takes a guinea.*

*Lady Town.* Why, I did not bid you take it?

*Trusty.* No; but your ladyship looked as if you were just going to bid me; and so I was willing to save you the trouble of speaking, madam.

*Lady Town.* Well, thou hast deserved it; and so, for once—but hark! don't I hear the man making a noise yonder? Though, I think, now, we may compound for a little of his ill-humour—

*Trusty.* I'll listen.

*Lady Town.* Prithee, do.

[TRUSTY *goes to the door.*

*Trusty.* Ay, they are at it, madam—he's in a bitter passion with poor Poundage—Bless me! I believe he'll beat him—Mercy on us, how the wretch swears!

*Lady Town.* And a sober citizen, too! that's a shame.

*Trusty.* Ha! I think all's silent of a sudden—may be the porter has knocked him down——I'll step and see—— [*Exit* TRUSTY.

*Lady Town.* These trades-people are the troublesomest creatures! No words will satisfy them.

TRUSTY *returns.*

*Trusty.* Oh, madam! Undone, undone! My lord has just bolted out upon the man, and is hearing all his pitiful story over—If your ladyship pleases to come hither, you may hear him yourself.

*Lady Town.* No matter; it will come round presently: I shall have it from my lord, without losing a word by the way, I'll warrant you.

*Trusty.* Oh, lud, madam! here's my lord just coming in.

*Lady Town.* Do you get out of the way, then.—[*Exit* TRUSTY.]—I am afraid I want spirits; but he will soon give them me.

*Enter* LORD TOWNLY.

*Lord Town.* How comes it, madam, that a tradesman dares be clamorous in my house, for money due to him from you?

*Lady Town.* You don't expect, my lord, that I should answer for other people's impertinence?

*Lord Town.* I expect, madam, you should answer for your own extravagancies, that are the occasion of it——I thought I had given you money three months ago, to satisfy all these sort of people.

*Lady Town.* Yes; but you see they never are to be satisfied.

*Lord Town.* Nor am I, madam, longer to be abused thus; what's become of the last five hundred I gave you?

*Lady Town.* Gone.

*Lord Town.* Gone! What way, madam?

*Lady Town.* Half the town over, I believe, by this time.

*Lord Town.* 'Tis well; I see ruin will make no impression, till it falls upon you.

*Lady Town.* In short, my lord, if money is always the subject of our conversation, I shall make you no answer.

*Lord Town.* Madam, madam, I will be heard, and make you answer.

*Lady Town.* Make me! Then I must tell you, my lord, this is a language I have not been used to, and I won't bear it.

*Lord Town.* Come, come, madam, you shall bear a great deal more, before I part with you.

*Lady Town.* My lord, if you insult me, you will have as much to bear on your side, I can assure you.

*Lord Town.* Pooh! Your spirit grows ridiculous—You have neither honour, worth, or innocence to support it.

*Lady Town.* You'll find, at least, I have resentment; and do you look well to the provocation.

*Lord Town.* After those you have given me, madam, 'tis almost infamous to talk with you.

*Lady Town.* I scorn your imputation, and your menaces. The narrowness of your heart's your monitor; 'tis there, there, my lord, you are wounded: you have less to complain of than many husbands of an equal rank to you.

*Lord Town.* Death, madam! Do you presume upon your corporal merit, that your person's less tainted than your mind? Is it there, there alone, an honest husband can be injured? Have you not every other vice that can debase your birth, or stain the heart of woman? Is not your health, your beauty, husband, fortune, family disclaimed, for nights consumed in riot and extravagance? The wanton does no more; if she conceals her shame, does less: and sure the dissolute avowed, as sorely wrongs my honour and my quiet.

*Lady Town.* I see, my lord, what sort of wife might please you.

*Lord Town.* Ungrateful woman! Could you have seen yourself, you, in yourself, had seen her —I am amazed our legislature has left no precedent of a divorce for this more visible injury, this adultery of the mind, as well as that of the person! When a woman's whole heart is alienated to pleasures I have no share in, what is it to me, whether a black ace, or a powdered coxcomb, has possesion of it?

*Lady Town.* If you have not found it yet, my lord, this is not the way to get possession of mine, depend upon't.

*Lord Town.* That, madam, I have long despaired of; and, since our happiness cannot be mutual, 'tis fit, that, with our hearts, our persons, too, should separate. This house you sleep no more in: though your content might grossly feed upon the dishonour of a husband, yet my desires would starve upon the features of a wife.

*Lady Town.* Your style, my lord, is much of the same delicacy with your sentiments of honour.

*Lord Town.* Madam, madam, this is no time for compliments—I have done with you.

*Lady Town.* If we had never met, my lord, I had not broke my heart for it: but have a care; I may not, perhaps, be so easily recalled as you may imagine.

*Lord Town.* Recalled! Whose there?

*Enter a Servant.*

Desire my sister and Mr Manly to walk up.

[*Exit.*

*Lady Town.* My lord, you may proceed as you please; but, pray, what indiscretions have I committed, that are not daily practised by a hundred other women of quality?

*Lord Town.* 'Tis not the number of ill wives, madam, that makes the patience of a husband less contemptible: and though a bad one may be the best man's lot, yet, he'll make a better figure in the world, that keeps his misfortunes out of doors, than he that tamely keeps them within.

*Lady Town.* I don't know what figure you may make, my lord; but I shall have no reason to be ashamed of mine, in whatever company I may meet you.

*Lord Town.* Be sparing of your spirit, madam; you'll need it to support you.

*Enter* LADY GRACE *and* MANLY.

Mr Manly, I have an act of friendship to beg of you, which wants more apologies than words can make for it.

*Man.* Then, pray, make none, my lord, that I may have the greater merit in obliging you.

*Lord Town.* Sister, I have the same excuse to intreat of you, too.

*Lady Grace.* To your request, I beg, my lord.

*Lord Town.* Thus, then———As you both were present at my ill-considered marriage, I now desire you each will be a witness of my determined separation—I know, sir, your good-nature, and my sister's, must be shocked at the office I impose on you; but as I don't ask your justification of my cause, so I hope you are conscious—that an ill woman can't reproach you, if you are silent, on her side.

*Man.* My lord, I never thought, till now, it could be difficult to oblige you.

*Lady Grace.* [*Aside.*] Heavens, how I tremble!

*Lord Town.* For you, my lady Townly, I need not here repeat the provocations of my parting with you——the world, I fear, is too well informed of them——For the good lord, your dead father's sake, I will still support you as his daughter——As Lord Townly's wife, you have had every thing a fond husband could bestow, and (to our mutual shame I speak it) more than happy wives desire—But those indulgences must end; state, equipage, and splendour, but ill become the vices that misuse them——The decent necessaries of life shall be supplied——but not one article to luxury; not even the coach, that waits to carry you from hence, shall you ever use again. Your tender aunt, my lady Lovemore, with tears, this morning, has consented to receive you; where, if time and your condition bring you to a due reflection, your allowance shall be increased—but if you are still lavish of your little, or pine for past licentious pleasures, that little shall be less: nor will I call that soul my friend, that names you in my hearing.

*Lady Grace.* My heart bleeds for her.

[*Aside.*

*Lord Town.* Oh, Manly, look there! turn back thy thoughts with me, and witness to my growing love. There was a time, when I believed that form incapable of vice, or of decay; there I proposed the partner of an easy home; there I, for ever, hoped to find a cheerful companion, an agreeable intimate, a faithful friend, a useful

help-mate, and a tender mother—but, oh! how bitter now the disappointment!

*Man.* The world is different in its sense of happiness; offended as you are, I know you will still be just.

*Lord Town.* Fear me not.

*Man.* This last reproach, I see, has struck her. [*Aside.*

*Lord Town.* No, let me not (though I this moment cast her from my heart for ever) let me not urge her punishment beyond her crimes—I know the world is fond of any tale that feeds its appetite of scandal: and, as I am conscious severities of this kind seldom fail of imputations too gross to mention, I here, before you both, acquit her of the least suspicion raised against the honour of my bed. Therefore, when abroad her conduct may be questioned, do her fame that justice.

*Lady Town.* Oh, sister!

[*Turns to* LADY GRACE, *weeping.*

*Lord Town.* When I am spoken of, where, without favour, this action may be canvassed, relate but half my provocations, and give me up to censure. [*Going.*

*Lady Town.* Support me! save me! hide me from the world!

[*Falling on* LADY GRACE'S *neck.*

*Lord Town.* [*Returning.*] I had forgot me—You have no share in my resentment; therefore, as you have lived in friendship with her, your parting may admit of gentler terms than suit the honour of an injured husband. [*Offers to go out.*

*Man.* [*Interposing.*] My lord, you must not, shall not leave her thus! One moment's stay can do your cause no wrong! If looks can speak the anguish of her heart, I'll answer with my life, there's something labouring in her mind, that, would you bear the hearing, might deserve it.

*Lord Town.* Consider! since we no more can meet, press not my staying to insult her.

*Lady Town.* Yet stay, my lord—the little I would say will not deserve an insult; and, undeserved, I know your nature gives it not. But as you've called in friends to witness your resentment, let them be equal hearers of my last reply.

*Lord Town.* I shan't refuse you that, madam—be it so.

*Lady Town.* My lord, you ever have complained I wanted love; but, as you kindly have allowed I never gave it to another; so, when you hear the story of my heart, though you may still complain, you will not wonder at my coldness.

*Lady Grace.* This promises a reverse of temper. [*Apart.*

*Man.* This, my lord, you are concerned to hear.

*Lord Town.* Proceed; I am attentive.

*Lady Town.* Before I was your bride, my lord, the flattering world had talked me into beauty, which, at my glass, my youthful vanity confirmed. Wild with that fame, I thought mankind my slaves; I triumphed over hearts, while all my pleasure was their pain: yet was my own so equally insensible to all, that, when a father's firm commands enjoined me to make choice of one, I even then declined the liberty he gave, and to his own election yielded up my youth——his tender care, my lord, directed him to you——Our hands were joined; But still my heart was wedded to its folly. My only joy was power, command, society, profuseness, and to lead in pleasures: The husband's right to rule, I thought a vulgar law, which only the deformed or meanly-spirited obeyed. I knew no directors, but my passions! no master, but my will! Even you, my lord, some time o'ercome by love, was pleased with my delights, nor then foresaw this mad misuse of your indulgence———-And, though I call myself ungrateful, while I own it, yet, as a truth, it cannot be denied——that kind indulgence has undone me; it added strength to my habitual failings; and, in a heart thus warm, in wild unthinking life, no wonder if the gentler sense of love was lost.

*Lord Town.* Oh, Manly! where has this creature's heart been buried? [*Apart.*

*Man.* If yet recoverable———How vast the treasure! [*Apart.*

*Lady Town.* What I have said, my lord, is not my excuse, but my confession; my errors (give them, if you please, a harder name) cannot be defended. No! What's in its nature wrong, no words can palliate, no plea can alter. What then remains in my condition, but resignation to your pleasure? Time only can convince you of my future conduct: therefore, till I have lived an object of forgiveness, I dare not hope for pardon——The penance of a lonely, contrite life, were little to the innocent; but, to have deserved this separation, will strow perpetual thorns upon my pillow.

*Lady Grace.* Oh, happy, heavenly hearing!

*Lady Town.* Sister, farewell! [*Kissing her.*] Your virtue needs no warning from the shame that falls on me: but when you think I have atoned my follies past—persuade your injured brother to forgive them.

*Lord Town.* No, madam! Your errors, thus renounced, this instant are forgiven! So deep, so due a sense of them, has made you what my utmost wishes formed, and all my heart has sighed for.

*Lady Town.* [*Turning to* LADY GRACE.] How odious does this goodness make me!

*Lady Grace.* How amiable your thinking so!

*Lord Town.* Long parted friends, that pass through easy voyages of life, receive but common gladness at their meeting: but from a shipwreck saved, we mingle tears with our embraces!

[*Embracing* LADY TOWNLY.

*Lady Town.* What words, what love, what duty, can repay such obligations!

*Lord Town.* Preserve but this desire to please, your power is endless.

*Lady Town.* Oh!—till this moment never did I know, my lord, I had a heart to give you.

*Lord Town.* By Heaven! this yielding hand, when first it gave you to my wishes, presented not a treasure more desirable! Oh, Manly! sister! as you have often shared in my disquiet, partake now of my felicity! my new-born joy! see, here, the bride of my desires! This may be called my wedding-day.

*Lady Grace.* Sister, (for now, methinks, that name is dearer to my heart than ever) let me congratulate the happiness that opens to you.

*Man.* Long, long, and mutual, may it flow——

*Lord Town.* To make our happiness complete, my dear, join here with me to give a hand, that amply will repay the obligation.

*Lady Town.* Sister, a day like this———

*Lady Grace.* Admits of no excuse against the general joy. [*Gives her hand to* MANLY.

*Man.* A joy like mine———despairs of words to speak it.

*Lord Town.* Oh, Manly, how the name of friend endears the brother! [*Embracing him.*

*Man.* Your words, my lord, will warm me to deserve them.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* My lord, the apartments are full of masqueraders—And some people of quality there desire to see your lordship and my lady.

*Lady Town.* I thought, my lord, your orders had forbid their revelling?

*Lord Town.* No, my dear, Manly has desired their admittance to-night, it seems, upon a particular occasion—Say we will wait upon them instantly. [*Exit Servant.*

*Lady Town.* I shall be but ill company to them.

*Lord Town.* No matter: not to see them, would on a sudden be too particular. Lady Grace will assist you to entertain them.

*Lady Town.* With her, my lord, I shall be always easy———Sister, to your unerring virtue I now commit the guidance of my future days—

Never the paths of pleasure more to tread,
But where your guided innocence shall lead;
For, in the marriage-state, the world must own
Divided happiness was never known.
To make it mutual, nature points the way:
Let husbands govern; gentle wives obey.
[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Opening to another apartment, discovers a great number of people in masquerade, talking all together, and playing upon one another.* LADY WRONGHEAD *as a shepherdess;* JENNY *as a nun; the 'Squire as a running footman; and the Count in a domino.*

*After some time,* LORD *and* LADY TOWNLY, *with* LADY GRACE, *enter to them, unmasked.*

*Lord Town.* So! here's a great deal of company.

*Lady Town.* A great many people, my lord, but no company———as you'll find———for here's one now that seems to have a mind to entertain us.

[*A Mask, after some affected gesture, makes up to* LADY TOWNLY.

*Mask.* Well, dear lady Townly, sha'n't we see you by-and-by?

*Lady Town.* I don't know you, madam.

*Mask.* Don't you seriously? [*In a squeaking tone.*

*Lady Town.* Not I, indeed.

*Mask.* Well, that's charming; but can't you guess?

*Lady Town.* Yes, I could guess wrong, I believe.

*Mask.* That's what I'd have you do.

*Lady Town.* But, madam, if I don't know you at all, is not that as well?

*Mask.* Ay, but you do know me.

*Lady Town.* Dear sister, take her off my hands; there's no bearing this. [*Apart.*

*Lady Grace.* I fancy I know you, madam.

*Mask.* I fancy you don't; what makes you think you do?

*Lady Grace.* Because I have heard you talk.

*Mask.* Ay, but you don't know my voice, I'm sure.

*Lady Grace.* There is something in your wit and humour, madam, so very much your own, it is impossible you can be any body but my lady Trifle.

*Mask.* [*Unmasking.*] Dear lady Grace! thou art a charming creature.

*Lady Grace.* Is there nobody else we know here?

*Mask.* Oh dear, yes! I have found out fifty already.

*Lady Grace.* Pray who are they?

*Mask.* Oh, charming company! there's lady Ramble——lady Riot——lady Kill-care—lady Squander——lady Strip——lady Pawn——and the dutchess of Single Guinea.

*Lord Town.* Is it not hard, my dear, that people of sense and probity are sometimes forced to seem fond of such company? [*Apart.*

*Lady Town.* My lord, it will always give me pain to remember their acquaintance, but none to drop it immediately. [*Apart.*

*Lady Grace.* But you have given us no account of the men, madam. Are they good for any thing?

*Mask.* Oh, yes, you must know, I always find out them by their endeavours to find out me.

*Lady Grace.* Pray, who are they?

*Mask.* Why, for your men of tip-top wit and

pleasure, about town, there's my lord—Bite—lord Archwag—Young Brazen-wit—lord Timberdown—-lord Joint-life—-and——lord Mortgage. Then for your pretty fellows only—there's sir Powder Peacock——lord Lapwing——Billy Magpie——Beau Frightful—sir Paul Plaistercrown, and the marquis of Monkey-man.

*Lady Grace.* Right! and these are the fine gentlemen that never want elbow-room at an assembly.

*Mask.* The rest, I suppose, by their tawdry hired habits, are tradesmen's wives, inns-of-court beaux, Jews, and kept mistresses.

*Lord Town.* An admirable collection!

*Lady Grace.* Well, of all our public diversions, I am amazed how this, that is so very expensive, and has so little to shew for it, can draw so much company together!

*Lord Town.* Oh, if it were not expensive, the better sort would not come into it: and because money can purchase a ticket, the common people scorn to be kept out of it.

*Mask.* Right, my lord. Poor lady Grace! I suppose you are under the same astonishment, that an opera should draw so much good company.

*Lady Grace.* Not at all, madam: 'tis an easier matter, sure, to gratify the ear, than the understanding. But have you no notion, madam, of receiving pleasure and profit at the same time?

*Mask.* Oh, quite none! unless it be sometimes winning a great stake; laying down a *vole, sans prendre*, may come up to the profitable pleasure you were speaking of.

*Lord Town.* You seem attentive, my dear?

[*Apart.*

*Lady Town.* I am, my lord; and amazed at my own follies, so strongly painted in another woman. [*Apart.*

*Lady Grace.* But see, my lord, we had best adjourn our debate, I believe; for here are some masks that seem to have a mind to divert other people as well as themselves.

*Lord Town.* The least we can do, is to give them a clear stage then.

[*A dance of masks here in various characters.* This was a favour extraordinary.

*Enter* MANLY.

Oh, Manly, I thought we had lost you.

*Man.* I ask pardon, my lord; but I have been obliged to look a little after my country family.

*Lord Town.* Well, pray, what have you done with them?

*Man.* They are all in the house here, among the masks, my lord; if your lordship has curiosity enough to step into a lower apartment, in three minutes I'll give you an ample account of them.

*Lord Town.* Oh, by all means: we'll wait upon you.

[*The scene shuts upon the masks to a smaller apartment.*

MANLY *re-enters with* SIR FRANCIS WRONGHEAD.

*Sir Fran.* Well, cousin, you have made my very hair stond on end! Waunds! if what you tell me be true, I'll stuff my whole family into a stage-coach, and trundle them into the country again on Monday morning.

*Man.* Stick to that, sir, and we may yet find a way to redeem all. In the mean time, place yourself behind this screen, and, for the truth of what I have told you, take the evidence of your own senses: but be sure you keep close till I give you the signal.

*Sir Fran.* Sir, I'll warrant you—Ah, my lady! my lady Wronghead! What a bitter business have you drawn me into!

*Man.* Hush! to your post; here comes one couple already.

[SIR FRANCIS *retires behind the screen.* *Exit* MANLY.

*Enter* MYRTILLA *with* SQUIRE RICHARD.

*Squire Rich.* What, is this the doctor's chamber?

*Myr.* Yes, yes; speak softly.

*Squire Rich.* Well, but where is he?

*Myr.* He'll be ready for us presently; but he says, he can't do us the good turn without witnesses: so, when the count and your sister come, you know he and you may be fathers for one another.

*Squire Rich.* Well, well; tit for tat! ay, ay, that will be friendly.

*Myr.* And see, here they come.

*Enter* COUNT BASSET, *and* MISS JENNY.

*Count Bas.* So, so, here's your brother and his bride, before us, my dear.

*Jenny.* Well, I vow, my heart's at my mouth still! I thought I should never have got rid of mamma; but while she stood gaping upon the dance, I gave her the slip? Lawd, do but feel how it beats here!

*Count Bas.* Oh, the pretty flutterer! I protest, my dear, you have put mine into the same palpitation!

*Jenny.* Ay, say you so?——but let's see now—Oh, lud! I vow it thumps purely—well, well, I see it will do; and so, where's the parson?

*Count Bas.* Mrs Myrtilla, will you be so good as to see if the doctor's ready for us?

*Myr.* He only staid for you, sir: I'll fetch him immediately. [*Exit* MYR.

*Jenny.* Pray, sir, am not I to take place of mamma, when I'm a countess?

*Count Bas.* No doubt on't, my dear.

*Jenny.* Oh, lud! how her back will be up then,

when she meets me at an assembly; or you and I in our coach and six at Hyde Park together!

*Count Bas.* Ay, or when she hears the box-keepers at an opera, call out—The countess of Basset's servants!

*Jenny.* Well, I say it, that will be delicious! And then, mayhap, to have a fine gentleman, with a star and a what-d'ye-call-um ribbon, lead me to my chair, with his hat under his arm all the way! Hold up, says the chairman; and so, says I, my lord, your humble servant. I suppose, madam, says he, we shall see you at my lady Quadrille's? Ay, ay, to be sure, my lord, says I—So in swops me, with my hoop stuffed up to my forehead; and away they trot, swing! swang! with my tassels dangling, and my flambeaux blazing, and——Oh, it's a charming thing to be a woman of quality!

*Count Bas.* Well! I see that, plainly, my dear, there's ne'er a duchess of them all will become an equipage like you.

*Jenny.* Well, well, do you find equipage, and I'll find airs, I warrant you.

SONG.

*What though they call me country lass,*
*I read it plainly in my glass,*
*That for a duchess I might pass;*
*Oh, could I see the day!*
*Would fortune but attend my call,*
*At park, at play, at ring, and ball,*
*I'd brave the proudest of them all,*
*With a stand by—clear the way!*

*Surrounded by a crowd of beaux,*
*With smart toupees, and powdered clothes,*
*At rivals I'd turn up my nose;*
*Oh, could I see the day!*
*I'd dart such glances from these eyes,*
*Should make some lord or duke my prize:*
*And then, oh, how I'd tyrannize,*
*With a stand by—clear the way!*

*Oh, then for every new delight,*
*For equipage and diamonds bright,*
*Quadrille, and plays, and balls all night;*
*Oh, could I see the day!*
*Of love and joy I'd take my fill,*
*The tedious hours of life to kill,*
*In every thing I'd have my will,*
*With a stand by—clear the way!*

*Squire Rich.* Troth! I think this masquerading's the merriest game that ever I saw in my life! Thof' in my mind, an there were but a little wrestling, or cudgel-playing naw, it would help it hugely. But what a-rope makes the parson stay so?

*Count Bas.* Oh, here he comes, I believe.

*Enter* MYRTILLA, *with a Constable.*

*Con.* Well, madam, pray which is the party that wants a spice of my office here?

*Myr.* That's the gentleman. [*Pointing to the Count.*

*Count Bas.* Hey-day! what, in masquerade, doctor?

*Con.* Doctor! Sir, I believe you have mistaken your man: but, if you are called count Basset, I have a billet-doux in my hand for you, that will set you right presently.

*Count Bas.* What the devil's the meaning of all this?

*Con.* Only my lord chief justice's warrant against you for forgery, sir.

*Count Bas.* Blood and thunder!

*Con.* And so, sir, if you please to pull off your fool's frock there, I'll wait upon you to the next justice of peace immediately.

*Jenny.* Oh, dear me, what's the matter? [*Trembling.*

*Count Bas.* Oh, nothing, only a masquerading frolic, my dear.

*Squire Rich.* Oh, ho! is that all?

*Sir Fran.* No, sirrah! that is not all!

[SIR FRANCIS, *coming softly behind the squire, knocks him down with his cane.*

*Enter* MANLY.

*Squire Rich.* Oh, lawd! Oh, lawd! he has beaten my brains out.

*Man.* Hold, hold, sir Francis! have a little mercy upon my poor godson, pray, sir.

*Sir Fran.* Wounds, cousin, I han't patience.

*Count Bas.* Manly! nay, then, I'm blown to the devil. [*Aside.*

*Squire Rich.* Oh, my head! my head!

*Enter* LADY WRONGHEAD.

*Lady Wrong.* What's the matter here, gentlemen? For Heaven's sake! What, are you murdering my children?

*Con.* No, no, madam! no murder! only a little suspicion of felony, that's all.

*Sir Fran.* [*To* JENNY.] And for you, Mrs Hot-upon't, I could find in my heart to make you wear that habit as long as you live, you jade you. Do you know, hussy, that you were within two minutes of marrying a pickpocket?

*Count Bas.* So, so, all's out I find. [*Aside.*

*Jenny.* Oh, the mercy! why, pray, papa, is not the count a man of quality, then?

*Sir Fran.* Oh, yes, one of the unhanged ones, it seems.

*Lady Wrong.* [*Aside.*] Married! Oh, the confident thing! There was his urgent business, then—slighted for her! I han't patience!—and, for aught I know, I have been all this while making a friendship with a highwayman.

*Man.* Mr Constable, secure there.

*Sir Fran.* Ah, my lady! my lady! this comes of your journey to London: but now I'll have a frolic of my own, madam; therefore pack up your trumpery this very night; for, the moment my horses are able to crawl, you and your brats shall make a journey into the country again.

*Lady Wrong.* Indeed, you are mistaken, sir Francis—I shall not stir out of town, yet, I promise you.

*Sir Fran.* Not stir? Waunds, madam——

*Man.* Hold, sir! If you'll give me leave a little—I fancy I shall prevail with my lady to think better on't.

*Sir Fran.* Ah, cousin, you are a friend, indeed!

*Man.* [*Apart to my lady.*] Look you, madam, as to the favour you designed me, in sending this spurious letter inclosed to my lady Grace, all the revenge I have taken, is to have saved your son and daughter from ruin. Now, if you will take them fairly and quietly into the country again, I will save your ladyship from ruin.

*Lady Wrong.* What do you mean, sir?

*Man.* Why, sir Francis shall never know what is in this letter; look upon it. How it came into my hands, you shall know at leisure.

*Lady Wrong.* Ha!—my billet-doux to the count! and an appointment in it! I shall sink with confusion!

*Man.* What shall I say to sir Francis, madam?

*Lady Wrong.* Dear sir, I am in such a trembling! preserve my honour, and I am all obedience. [*Apart to* MANLY.

*Man.* Sir Francis——my lady is ready to receive your commands for her journey, whenever you please to appoint it.

*Sir Fran.* Ah, cousin, I doubt I am obliged to you for it.

*Man.* Come, come, sir Francis; take it as you find it. Obedience in a wife is a good thing, though it were never so wonderful! And now, sir, we have nothing to do but to dispose of this gentleman.

*Count Bas.* Mr Manly! sir! I hope you won't ruin me!

*Man.* Did you forge this note for five hundred pounds, sir?

*Count Bas.* Sir——I see you know the world, and, therefore, I shall not pretend to prevaricate—But it has hurt nobody yet, sir; I beg you will not stigmatise me; since you have spoiled my fortune in one family, I hope you won't be so cruel to a young fellow, as to put it out of my power, sir, to make it in another, sir.

*Man.* Look you, sir, I have not much time to waste with you: but, if you expect mercy yourself, you must shew it to one you have been cruel to.

*Count Bas.* Cruel, sir!

*Man.* Have you not ruined this young woman?

*Count Bas.* I, sir!

*Man.* I know you have—therefore, you can't blame her, if, in the fact you are charged with, she is a principal witness against you. However, you have one, and only one chance to get off with. Marry her this instant—and you take off her evidence.

*Count Bas.* Dear sir!

*Man.* No words, sir; a wife, or a mittimus.

*Count Bas.* Lord, sir! this is the most unmerciful mercy!

*Man.* A private penance, or a public one—Constable.

*Count Bas.* Hold, sir; since you are pleased to give me my choice, I will not make so ill a compliment to the lady, as not to give her the preference.

*Man.* It must be done this minute, sir: the chaplain you expected is still within call.

*Count Bas.* Well, sir,———since it must be so———Come, spouse——I am not the first of the fraternity, that has run his head into one noose, to keep it out of another.

*Myr.* Come, sir, don't repine: marriage is, at worst, but playing upon the square.

*Count Bas.* Ay, but the worst of the match, too, is the devil.

*Man.* Well, sir, to let you see it is not so bad as you think it, as a reward for her honesty, in detecting your practices, instead of the forged bill you would have put upon her, there's a real one of five hundred pounds to begin a new honey moon with. [*Gives it to* MYRTILLA.

*Count Bas.* Sir, this is so generous an act—

*Man.* No compliments, dear sir—I am not at leisure now to receive them. Mr Constable, will you be so good as to wait upon this gentleman into the next room, and give this lady in marriage to him?

*Con.* Sir, I'll do it faithfully.

*Count Bas.* Well, five hundred will serve to make a handsome push with, however.

[*Exeunt* COUNT BASSET, MYRTILLA, *and Constable.*

*Sir Fran.* And that I may be sure my family's rid of him for ever—come, my lady, let's even take our children along with us, and be all witnesses of the ceremony.

[*Exeunt* SIR FRANCIS, LADY WRONGHEAD, MISS *and* SQUIRE.]

*Man.* Now, my lord, you may enter.

*Enter* LORD *and* LADY TOWNLY, *and* LADY GRACE.

*Lord Town.* So, sir, I give you joy of your negociation.

*Man.* You overheard it all, I presume?

*Lady Grace.* From first to last, sir.

*Lord Town.* Never were knaves and fools better disposed of.

*Man.* A sort of poetical justice, my lord, not much above the judgment of a modern comedy.

*Lord Town.* To heighten that resemblance, I think, sister, there only wants your rewarding the hero of the fable, by naming the day of his happiness.

*Lady Grace.* This day, to-morrow, every hour, I hope, of life to come, will shew I want not inclination to complete it.

*Man.* Whatever I may want, madam, you will always find endeavours to deserve you.

*Lord Town.* Then, all are happy.

*Lady Town.* Sister, I give you joy consummate as the happiest pair can boast.

In you, methinks, as in a glass, I see
The happiness, that once advanced to me.
So visible the bliss, so plain the way,
How was it possible my sense could stray?
But now, a convert to this truth I come,
That married happiness is never found from home. [*Exeunt omnes.*

# THE

# SUSPICIOUS HUSBAND.

BY

*HOADLY.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### MEN.

MR STRICTLAND, *the suspicious husband.*
FRANKLY, *attached to* CLARINDA.
BELLAMY, *attached to* JACINTHA.
RANGER, *a generous rake.*
JACK MEGGOT, *a good-natured coxcomb.*
BUCKLE, *servant to* BELLAMY.
TESTER, *servant to* STRICTLAND.
SERVANT *to* RANGER.
SIMON, *servant to* CLARINDA.

### WOMEN.

MRS STRICTLAND, *wife to* STRICTLAND.
CLARINDA, *her friend.*
JACINTHA, STRICTLAND'S *ward.*
LUCETTA, *maid to* MRS STRICTLAND.
LANDLADY.
MILLINER.
MAID.

*Chairmen, Footmen, &c.*

*Scene—London.*

## ACT I.

SCENE I.—RANGER'S *chambers in the Temple. A knocking is heard at the door for some time; when* RANGER *enters, having let himself in.*

*Ran.* Once more I am got safe to the Temple. Let me reflect a little. I have sat up all night: I have my head full of bad wine, and the noise of oaths, dice, and the damned tinkling of tavern bells; my spirits jaded, and my eyes sunk in my head; and all this for the conversation of a company of fellows I despise. Their wit lies only in obscenity, their mirth in noise, and their delight in a box and dice. Honest Ranger, take my word for it, thou art a mighty silly fellow!

*Enter a Servant, with a wig dressed.*

Where have you been, rascal? If I had not had the key in my pocket, I must have waited at the door in this dainty dress.

*Ser.* I was only below combing out your honour's wig.

*Ran.* Well, give me my cap.—[*Pulling off his wig.*] Why, how like a raking dog do you look, compared to that spruce, sober gentleman! Go, you battered devil, and be made fit to be seen!

[*Throwing his wig to the servant.*

*Ser.* Cod, my master's very merry this morning. [*Exit.*

*Ran.* And now for the law.

[*Sits down, and reads.*

'Tell me no more, I am deceiv'd,
'That Chloe's false and common;
'By Heaven, I all along believ'd
'She was a very woman!
'As such I lik'd, as such caress'd;
'She still was constant when possessed:
'She could do more for no man.'

Honest Congreve was a man after my own heart;

*Servants pass over the stage.*

Have you been for the money this morning, as I ordered you?

*Ser.* No, sir. You bade me go before you was up; I did not know your honour meant before you went to bed.

*Ran.* None of your jokes, I pray; but to business. Go to the coffee-house, and inquire if there has been any letter or message left for me.

*Ser.* I shall, sir.

*Ran.* [*Repeats.*]

'You think she's false; I'm sure she's kind:
'I take her body, You her mind;
'Which has the better bargain?'

Oh, that I had such a soft, deceitful fair, to lull my senses to their desired sleep! [*Knocking at the door.*] Come in.

*Enter* SIMON.

Oh, master Simon, is it you? How long have you been in town?

*Sim.* Just come, sir; and but for a little time neither; and yet I have as many messages as if we were to stay the whole year round. Here they are, all of them, [*Pulls out a number of cards.*] and, among them, one for your honour.

*Ran.* [*Reads.*] 'Clarinda's compliments to her 'cousin Ranger, and should be glad to see him 'for ever so little a time that he can be spared 'from the more weighty business of the law.' Ha, ha, ha! the same merry girl I ever knew her.

*Sim.* My lady is never sad, sir.

[*Knocking at the door.*

*Ran.* Pr'ythee, Simon, open the door.

*Enter Milliner.*

Well, child——and who are you?

*Mil.* Sir, my mistress gives her service to you; and has sent you home the linen you bespoke.

*Ran.* Well, Simon, my service to your lady, and let her know I will most certainly wait upon her. I am a little busy, Simon——and so——

*Sim.* Ah, you're a wag, Master Ranger, you're a wag——but mum for that. [*Exit.*

*Ran.* I swear, my dear, you have the prettiest pair of eyes——the loveliest pouting lips——I never saw you before.

*Mil.* No, sir! I was always in the shop.

*Ran.* Were you so?—Well, and what does your mistress say?——The devil fetch me, child, you looked so prettily, that I could not mind one word you said.

*Mil.* Lard, sir, you are such another gentleman!—Why, she says, she is sorry she could not send them sooner. Shall I lay them down?

*Ran.* No, child. Give them to me——Dear little smiling angel—— [*Catches, and kisses her.*

*Mil.* I beg, sir, you would be civil.

*Ran.* Civil! Egad, I think I am very civil.

[*Kisses her again.*

*Enter a Servant, and* BELLAMY.

*Ser.* Sir, Mr Bellamy.

*Ran.* Damn your impertinence——Oh, Mr Bellamy, your servant.

*Mil.* What shall I say to my mistress?

*Ran.* Bid her make half a dozen more; but be sure you bring them home yourself. [*Exit Milliner.*] Pshaw! Pox! Mr Bellamy, how should you like to be served so yourself?

*Bel.* How can you, Ranger, for a minute's pleasure, give an innocent girl the pain of heart I am confident she felt?——There was a modest blush upon her cheek that convinces me she is honest.

*Ran.* May be so. I was resolved to try, however, had you not interrupted the experiment.

*Bel.* Fy, Ranger! will you never think?

*Ran.* Yes; but I cannot be always athinking. The law is a damnable dry study, Mr Bellamy; and without something now and then to amuse and relax, it would be too much for my brain, I promise ye——But I am a mighty sober fellow grown. Here have I been at it these three hours; but the wenches will never let me alone.

*Bel.* Three hours! Why, do you usually study in such shoes and stockings?

*Ran.* Rat your inquisitive eyes! *Ex pede Herculem.* Egad, you have me. The truth is, I am but this moment returned from the tavern. What, Frankly here, too!

*Enter* FRANKLY.

*Frank.* My boy, Ranger, I am heartily glad to see you. Bellamy, let me embrace you; you are the person I want. I have been at your lodgings, and was directed hither.

*Ran.* It is to him, then, I am obliged for this visit: but with all my heart. He is the only man to whom I don't care how much I am obliged.

*Bel.* Your humble servant, sir.

*Frank.* You know, Ranger, I want no inducement to be with you. But——you look sadly—What——no merciless jade has——has she?

*Ran.* No, no; sound as a roach, my lad. I only got a little too much liquor last night, which I have not slept off yet.

*Bel.* Thus, Frankly, it is every day. All the morning his head aches; at noon, he begins to clear up; towards evening, he is good company; and all night, he is carefully providing for the same course the next day.

*Ran.* Why, I must own, my ghostly father, I did relapse a little last night, just to furnish out a decent confession for the day.

*Frank.* And he is now doing penance for it. Were you his confessor, indeed, you could not well desire more.

*Ran.* Charles, he sets up for a confessor with

the worst grace in the world. Here has he been reproving me for being but decently civil to my milliner. Plague! because the coldness of his constitution makes him insensible of a fine woman's charms every body else must be so, too.

*Bel.* I am no less sensible of their charms than you are; though I cannot kiss every woman I meet, or fall in love, as you call it, with every face which has the bloom of youth upon it. I would only have you a little more frugal of your pleasures.

*Frank.* My dear friend, this is very pretty talking! But, let me tell you, it is in the power of the very first glance from a fine woman, utterly to disconcert all your philosophy.

*Bel.* It must be from a fine woman, then; and not such as are generally reputed so. And it must be a thorough acquaintance with her, too, that will ever make an impression on my heart.

*Ran.* Would I could see it once! For when a man has been all his life hoarding up a stock, without allowing himself common necessaries, it tickles me to the soul to see him lay it all out upon a wrong bottom, and become bankrupt at last.

*Bel.* Well, I don't care how soon you see it. For the minute I find a woman capable of friendship, love, and tenderness, with good sense enough to be always easy, and good-nature enough to like me, I will immediately put it to the trial, which of us shall have the greatest share of happiness from the sex, you or I.

*Ran.* By marrying her, I suppose! Capable of friendship, love, and tenderness! ha, ha, ha! that a man of your sense should talk so! If she be capable of love, 'tis all I require of my mistress; and as every woman, who is young, is capable of love, I am very reasonably in love with every young woman I meet. My Lord Coke, in a case I read this morning, speaks my sense.

*Both.* My lord Coke!

*Ran.* Yes, MY lord Coke. What he says of one woman, I say of the whole sex: I take their bodies, you their minds; which has the better bargain?

*Fran.* There is no arguing with so great a lawyer. Suppose, therefore, we adjourn the debate to some other time. I have some serious business with Mr Bellamy, and you want sleep, I am sure.

*Ran.* Sleep! mere loss of time, and hinderance of business——We men of spirit, sir, are above it.

*Bel.* Whither shall we go?

*Fran.* Into the park. My chariot is at the door.

*Bel.* Then if my servant calls, you'll send him after us? [*Exeunt.*

*Ran.* I will. [*Looking on the card.*] 'Clarinda's compliments'—A pox of this head of mine, never once to ask where she was to be found! 'Tis plain she is not one of us, or I should not have been so remiss in my inquiries. No matter; I shall meet her in my walks.

*Servant enters.*

*Ser.* There is no letter nor message, sir.

*Ran.* Then my things to dress.———I take her body, you her mind; which has the better bargain? [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE II.—*A chamber.*

*Enter* MRS STRICTLAND *and* JACINTHA, *meeting.*

*Mrs Strict.* Good-morrow, my dear Jacintha.

*Jac.* Good-morrow to you, madam. I have brought my work, and intend to sit with you this morning. I hope you have got the better of your fatigue? Where is Clarinda? I should be glad if she would come and work with us.

*Mrs Strict.* She work! she is too fine a lady to do any thing. She is not stirring yet—we must let her have her rest. People of her waste of spirits require more time to recruit again.

*Jac.* It is pity she should be ever tired with what is so agreeable to every body else. I am prodigiously pleased with her company.

*Mrs Strict.* And when you are better acquainted, you will be still more pleased with her. You must rally her upon her partner at Bath; for I fancy part of her rest has been disturbed on his account.

*Jac.* Was he really a pretty fellow?

*Mrs Strict.* That I cannot tell; I did not dance myself, and so did not much mind him. You must have the whole story from herself.

*Jac.* Oh, I warrant ye, I get it all out. None are so proper to make discoveries in love, as those who are in the secret themselves.

*Enter* LUCETTA.

*Luc.* Madam, Mr Strictland is inquiring for you. Here has been Mr Buckle with a letter from his master, which has made him very angry.

*Jac.* Mr Bellamy said, indeed, he would try him once more, but I fear it will prove in vain. Tell your master I am here.—[*Exit* LUCETTA.]—What signifies fortune, when it only makes us slaves to other people?

*Mrs Strict.* Do not be uneasy, my Jacintha. You shall always find a friend in me: but as for Mr Strictland, I know not what ill temper hangs about him lately. Nothing satisfies him. You saw how he received us when we came off our journey. Though Clarinda was so good company, he was barely civil to her, and downright rude to me.

*Jac.* I cannot help saying, I did observe it.

*Mrs Strict.* I saw you did. Hush! he's here.

*Enter* MR STRICTLAND.

*Strict.* Oh, your servant, madam! Here, I have received a letter from Mr Bellamy, wherein he desires I would once more hear what he has to say. You know my sentiments; nay, so does he.

*Jac.* For Heaven's sake, consider, sir, this is no new affair, no sudden start of passion; we have known each other long. My father valued, and loved him; and, I am sure, were he alive, I should have his consent.

*Strict.* Don't tell me. Your father would not have you marry against his will; neither will I against mine: I am your father now.

*Jac.* And you take a fatherly care of me.

*Strict.* I wish I had never had any thing to do with you.

*Jac.* You may easily get rid of the trouble.

*Strict.* By listening, I suppose, to the young gentleman's proposals?

*Jac.* Which are very reasonable, in my opinion.

*Strict.* Oh, very modest ones truly! and a very modest gentleman he is, that proposes them! A fool, to expect a lady of thirty thousand pounds fortune, should, by the care and prudence of her guardian, be thrown away upon a young fellow not worth three hundred a-year! He thinks being in love is an excuse for this; but I am not in love: what does he think will excuse me?

*Mrs Strict.* Well; but, Mr Strictland, I think the gentleman should be heard.

*Strict.* Well, well; seven o'clock's the time, and, if the man has had the good fortune, since I saw him last, to persuade somebody or other to give him a better estate, I give him my consent, not else. His servant waits below: you may tell him I shall be at home.—[*Exit* JACINTHA.]—But where is your friend, your other half, all this while? I thought you could not have breathed a minute, without your Clarinda.

*Mrs Strict.* Why, the truth is, I was going to see what makes her keep her chamber so long.

*Strict.* Look ye, Mrs Strictland; you have been asking me for money this morning. In plain terms, not one shilling shall pass through these fingers, till you have cleared my house of this Clarinda.

*Mrs Strict.* How can her innocent gaiety have offended you? She is a woman of honour, and has as many good qualities——

*Strict.* As women of honour generally have.—I know it, and therefore am uneasy.

*Mrs Strict.* But, sir——

*Strict.* But, madam—Clarinda, nor e'er a rake of fashion in England, shall live in my family, to debauch it.

*Mrs Strict.* Sir, she treated me with so much civility in the country, that I thought I could not do less than invite her to spend as much time with me in town as her engagements would permit. I little imagined you could have been displeased at my having so agreeable a companion.

*Strict.* There was a time, when I was company enough for leisure hours.

*Mrs Strict.* There was a time, when every word of mine was sure of meeting with a smile; but those happy days, I know not why, have long been over.

*Strict.* I cannot bear a rival, even of your own sex. I hate the very name of female friends.—No two of you can ever be an hour by yourselves, but one or both are the worse for it.

*Mrs Strict.* Dear Mr Strictland——

*Strict.* This I know, and will not suffer.

*Mrs Strict.* It grieves me, sir, to see you so much in earnest: but, to convince you how willing I am to make you easy in every thing, it shall be my request to her to remove immediately.

*Strict.* Do it—hark ye—Your request!—Why yours? 'Tis mine—my command—tell her so. I will be master of my own family, and I care not who knows it.

*Mrs Strict.* You fright me, sir! But it shall be as you please.—[*In tears.*] [*Goes out.*

*Strict.* Ha! Have I gone too far? for I am not master of myself. Mrs Strictland!—[*She returns.*]—Understand me right. I do not mean, by what I have said, that I suspect your innocence; but, by crushing this growing friendship all at once, I may prevent a train of mischief which you do not foresee. I was, perhaps, too harsh; therefore, do it in your own way: but let me see the house fairly rid of her.

[*Exit* STRICTLAND.

*Mrs Strict.* His earnestness in this affair amazes me; I am sorry I made this visit to Clarinda; and yet I'll answer for her honour. What can I say to her? Necessity must plead in my excuse—for, at all events, Mr Strictland must be obeyed. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*St James's Park.*

*Enter* BELLAMY *and* FRANKLY.

*Frank.* Now, Bellamy, I may unfold the secret of my heart to you with greater freedom; for, though Ranger has honour, I am not in a humour to be laughed at. I must have one that will bear with my impertinence, sooth me into hope, and, like a friend indeed, with tenderness advise me.

*Bel.* I thought you appeared more grave than usual.

*Frank.* Oh, Bellamy! My soul is full of joy, of pain, hope, despair, and ecstacy, that no word but love is capable of expressing what I feel!

*Bel.* Is love the secret Ranger is not fit to hear? In my mind, he would prove the more able counsellor. And is all the gay indifference of my friend at last reduced to love?

*Frank.* Even so—Never was a prude more re-

solute in chastity and ill-nature, than I was fixed in indifference; but love has raised me from that inactive state, above the being of a man.

*Bel.* Faith, Charles, I begin to think it has: but, pray, bring this rapture into order a little, and tell me regularly, how, where, and when.

*Frank.* If I was not most unreasonably in love, those horrid questions would stop my mouth at once; but, as I am armed against reason—I answer—at Bath, on Tuesday, she danced and caught me.

*Bel.* Danced! And was that all? But who is she? What is her name? Her fortune? Where does she live?

*Frank.* Hold! Hold! Not so many hard questions. Have a little mercy. I know but little of her, that's certain; but all I do know, you shall have. That evening was the first of her appearing at Bath; the moment I saw her, I resolved to ask the favour of her hand; but the easy freedom with which she gave it, and her unaffected good humour during the whole night, gained such a power over my heart, as none of her sex could ever boast before. I waited on her home; and the next morning, when I went to pay the usual compliments, the bird was flown; she had set out for London two hours before, and in a chariot and six, you rogue!

*Bel.* But was it her own, Charles?

*Frank.* That I don't know; but it looks better than being dragged to town in the stage.—That day and the next I spent in inquiries. I waited on the ladies who came with her; they knew nothing of her. So, without learning either her name or fortune, I e'en called for my boots, and rode post after her.

*Bel.* And how do you find yourself after your journey?

*Frank.* Why, as yet, I own, I am but on a cold scent: but a woman of her sprightliness and gentility, cannot but frequent all public places; and, when once she is found, the pleasure of the chase will overpay the pains of rousing her. Oh, Bellamy! There was something peculiarly charming in her, that seemed to claim my further acquaintance; and if, in the more familiar parts of life, she shines with that superior lustre, and at last I win her to my arms, how shall I bless my resolution in pursuing her!

*Bel.* But if, at last, she should prove unworthy——

*Frank.* I would endeavour to forget her.

*Bel.* Promise me that, Charles,—[*Takes his hand.*]—and I allow—But we are interrupted.

*Enter* JACK MEGGOT.

*J. Meg.* Whom have we here? My old friend Frankly! Thou art grown a mere antique since I saw thee. How hast thou done these five hundred years?

*Frank.* Even as you see me; well, and at your service ever.

*J. Meg.* Ha! Whose that?

*Frank.* A friend of mine. Mr Bellamy, this is Jack Meggot, sir; as honest a fellow as any in life.

*J. Meg.* Pho! Prithee! Pox! Charles—— Don't be silly—Sir, I am your humble: any one who is a friend of my Frankly's, I am proud of embracing.

*Bel.* Sir, I shall endeavour to deserve your civility.

*J. Meg.* Oh, sir! Well, Charles; what, dumb? Come, come; you may talk, though you have nothing to say, as I do. Let us hear, where have you been?

*Frank.* Why, for this last week, Jack, I have been at Bath.

*J. Meg.* Bath! the most ridiculous place in life! amongst tradesmen's wives that hate their husbands, and people of quality that had rather go to the devil than stay at home. People of no taste; no *gout;* and, for devertimenti, if it were not for the puppet-show, la vertu would be dead amongst them. But the news, Charles; the ladies—I fear your time hung heavy on your hands, by the small stay you made there.

*Frank.* Faith, and so it did, Jack; the ladies are grown such idiots in love. The cards have so debauched their five senses, that love, almighty love himself, is utterly neglected.

*J. Meg.* It is the strangest thing in life, but it is just so with us abroad. Faith, Charles, to tell you a secret, which I don't care if all the world knows, I am almost surfeited with the services of the ladies; the modest ones, I mean. The vast variety of duties they expect, as dressing up to the fashion, losing fashionably, keeping fashionable hours, drinking fashionable liquors, and fifty other such irregular niceties, so ruin a man's pocket and constitution, that, 'foregad, he must have the estate of a duke, and the strength of a gondolier, who would list himself into their service.

*Frank.* A free confession, truly, Jack, for one of your coat!

*Bel.* The ladies are obliged to you.

*Enter* BUCKLE, *with a letter to* BELLAMY.

*J. Meg.* Oh, Lard, Charles! I have had the greatest misfortune in life since I saw you; poor Otho, that I brought from Rome with me, is dead!

*Frank.* Well, well; get you another, and all will be well again.

*J. Meg.* No; the rogue broke me so much china, and gnawed my Spanish leather shoes so filthily, that, when he was dead, I began not to endure him.

*Bel.* Exactly at seven! run back and assure him I will not fail.—[*Exit* BUCKLE.]—Dead! Pray, who was the gentleman?

*J. Meg.* The gentleman was my monkey, sir; an odd sort of a fellow, that used to divert me,

and pleased every body so at Rome, that he always made one in our conversationi. But, Mr Bellamy, I saw a servant; I hope no engagement, for you two positively shall dine with me: I have the finest macaroni in life. Oblige me so far.

*Bel.* Sir, your servant; what say you, Frankly?

*J. Meg.* Pho! Pox! Charles, you shall go.—My aunts think you begin to neglect them; and old maids, you know, are the most jealous creatures in life.

*Frank.* Ranger swears they cannot be maids, they are so good-natured. Well, I agree, on condition I may eat what I please, and go away just when I will.

*J. Meg.* Ay, ay, you shall do just what you will. But how shall we do? My post chaise won't carry us all.

*Frank.* My chariot is here; and I will conduct Mr Bellamy.

*Bel.* Mr Meggot, I beg pardon; I cannot possibly dine out of town; I have an engagement early in the evening.

*J. Meg.* Out of town! No, my dear, I live just by. I see one of the dillettanti, I would not miss speaking to for the universe. And so I expect you at three. [*Exit.*

*Frank.* Ha, ha, ha! and so you thought you had at least fifty miles to go post for a spoonful of macaroni?

*Bel.* I suppose, then, he is just come out of the country?

*Frank.* Nor that neither. I would venture a wager, from his own house hither, or to an auction or two of old dirty pictures, is the utmost of his travels to-day; or he may have been in pursuit, perhaps, of a new cargo of Venetian toothpicks.

*Bel.* A special acquaintance I have made today.

*Frank.* For all this, Bellamy, he has a heart worthy your friendship. He spends his estate freely, and you cannot oblige him more, than by shewing him how he can be of service to you.

*Bel.* Now you say something. It is the heart, Frankly, I value in a man.

*Frank.* Right—and there is a heart even in a woman's breast, that is worth the purchase, or my judgment has deceived me. Dear Bellamy, I know your concern for me; see her first, and then blame me, if you can.

*Bel.* So far from blaming you, Charles, that, if my endeavours can be serviceable, I will beat the bushes with you.

*Frank.* That, I am afraid, will not do. For you know less of her than I: but if, in your walks, you meet a finer woman than ordinary, let her not escape till I have seen her. Whereso-ever she is, she cannot long be hid.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.—*St James's Park.*

*Enter* CLARINDA, JACINTHA, *and* MRS STRICTLAND.

*Jac.* Ay, ay; we both stand condemned out of our own mouths.

*Cla.* Why, I cannot but own, I never had a thought of any man that troubled me but him.

*Mrs Strict.* Then, I dare swear, by this time, you heartily repent your leaving Bath so soon.

*Cla.* Indeed, you are mistaken. I have not had one scruple since.

*Jac.* Why, what one inducement can he have ever to think of you again?

*Cla.* Oh, the greatest of all inducements, curiosity: let me assure you, a woman's surest hold over a man, is to keep him in uncertainty. As soon as ever you put him out of doubt, you put him out of your power; but, when once a woman has awaked his curiosity, she may lead him a dance of many a troublesome mile, without the least fear of losing him at last.

*Jac.* Now do I heartily wish he may have spirit enough to follow, and use you as you deserve. Such a spirit, with but a little knowledge of our sex, might put that heart of yours into a strange flutter.

*Cla.* I care not how soon. I long to meet with such a fellow. Our modern beaux are such joint-babies in love, they have no feeling; they are entirely insensible either of pain or pleasure, but from their own dear persons; and, according as we flatter, or affront their beauty, they admire or forsake ours: they are not worthy even of our displeasure; and, in short, abusing them is but so much ill-nature merely thrown away. But the man of sense, who values himself upon his high abilities, or the man of wit, who thinks a woman beneath his conversation—to see such the subjects of our power, the slaves of our frowns and smiles, is glorious indeed!

*Mrs Strict.* No man of sense or wit either, if he be truly so, ever did, or ever can, think a woman of merit beneath his wisdom to converse with.

*Jac.* Nor will such a woman value herself upon making such a lover uneasy.

*Cla.* Amazing! Why, every woman can give ease. You cannot be in earnest.

*Mrs Strict.* I can assure you she is, and has put in practice the doctrine she has been teaching.

*Cla.* Impossible! Who ever heard the name of love mentioned without an idea of torment? But, pray let us hear.

*Jac.* Nay, there is nothing to hear that I know of.

*Cla.* So I suspected, indeed. The novel is not likely to be long, when the lady is so well prepared for the *denoüement*.

*Jac.* The novel, as you call it, is not so short as you may imagine. I and my spark have been long acquainted: as he was continually with my father, I soon perceived that he loved me; and the manner of his expressing that love, was what pleased and wounded me most.

*Cla.* Well; and how was it? the old bait, flattery; dear flattery, I warrant ye.

*Jac.* No, indeed; I had not the pleasure of hearing my person, wit, and beauty painted out with forced praises; but I had a more sensible delight, in perceiving the drift of his whole behaviour was to make every hour of my time pass away agreeably.

*Cla.* The rustic! what, did he never say a handsome thing of your person?

*Mrs Strict.* He did, it seems, what pleased her better; he flattered her good sense, as much as a less cunning lover would have done her beauty.

*Cla.* On my conscience, you are well matched.

*Jac.* So well, that if my guardian denies me happiness (and this evening he is to pass his final sentence), nothing is left but to break my prison, and fly into my lover's arms for safety.

*Cla.* Hey-day! O' my conscience thou art a brave girl. Thou art the very first prude that ever had honesty enough to avow her passion for a man.

*Jac.* And thou art the first finished coquette who ever had any honesty at all.

*Mrs Strict.* Come, come; you are both too good for either of those characters.

*Cla.* And my dear Mrs Strictland, here, is the first young married woman of spirit who has an ill-natured fellow for a husband, and never once thinks of using him as he deserves——Good Heaven! If I had such a husband——

*Mrs Strict.* You would be just as unhappy as I am.

*Cla.* But come now, confess——do not you long to be a widow?

*Mrs Strict.* Would I were any thing but what I am!

*Cla.* Then, go the nearest way about it. I'd break that stout heart of his in less than a fortnight. I'd make him know——

*Mrs Strict.* Pray, be silent. You know my resolution.

*Cla.* I know you have no resolution.

*Mrs Strict.* You are a mad creature, but I forgive you.

*Cla.* It is all meant kindly, I assure you. But, since you won't be persuaded to your good; I will think of making you easy in your submission, as soon as ever I can. I dare say, I may have the same lodging I had last year: I can know immediately—I see my chair: and so, ladies both, adieu. [*Exit.*

*Jac.* Come, Mrs Strictland, we shall but just have time to get home before Mr Bellamy comes.

*Mrs Strict.* Let us return, then, to our common prison. You must forgive my ill-nature, Jacintha, if I almost wish Mr Strictland may refuse to join your hand where your heart is given.

*Jac.* Lord, madam, what do you mean?

*Mrs Strict.* Self-interest only, child. Methinks your company in the country would soften all my sorrows, and I could bear them patiently.

*Re-enter* CLARINDA.

*Cla.* Dear Mrs Strictland—I am so confused, and so out of breath——

*Mrs Strict.* Why, what's the matter?

*Jac.* I protest you fright me.

*Cla.* Oh! I have no time to recover myself, I am so frightened, and so pleased. In short, then, the dear man is here.

*Mrs Strict.* Here—Lord—Where?

*Cla.* I met him this instant; I saw him at a distance, turned short, and ran hither directly.—Let us go home. I tell you he follows me.

*Mrs Strict.* Why, had you not better stay, and let him speak to you?

*Cla.* Ay! But then—he won't know where I live, without my telling him.

*Mrs Strict.* Come, then. Ha, ha, ha!

*Jac.* Ay, poor Clarinda!——*Allons donc.* [*Exeunt.*

*Enter* FRANKLY.

*Fran.* Sure that must be she! her shape and easy air cannot be so exactly copied by another. Now, you young rogue, Cupid, guide me directly to her, as you would the surest arrow in your quiver. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to the street before* MR STRICTLAND'S *door.*

*Re-enter* CLARINDA, JACINTHA, *and* MRS STRICTLAND.

*Cla.* Lord!—Dear Jacintha——for Heaven's sake make haste: he'll overtake us before we get in.

*Jac.* Overtake us! why, he is not in sight.

*Cla.* Is not he? Ha! Sure I have not dropt my twee—I would not have him lose sight of me neither. [*Aside.*

*Mrs Strict.* Here he is—

*Cla.* In——In——In, then.

*Jac.* [*Laughing.*] What, without your twee?

*Cla.* Pshaw! I have lost nothing——In, in, I'll follow you.

[*Exeunt into the house,* CLARINDA *last.*

*Enter* FRANKLY.

*Frank.* It is impossible I should be deceived. My eyes, and the quick pulses at my heart, assure me it is she. Ha! 'tis she, by Heaven! and the door left open too—A fair invitation, by all the rules of love. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to an apartment in* MR STRICTLAND'S *house.*

*Enter* CLARINDA, FRANKLY *following her.*

*Frank.* I hope, madam, you will excuse the boldness of this intrusion, since it is owing to your own behaviour that I am forced to it.

*Cla.* To my behaviour, sir!

*Frank.* You cannot but remember me at Bath, madam, where I so lately had the favour of your hand——

*Cla.* I do remember, sir; but I little expected any wrong interpretation of my behaviour from one who had so much the appearance of a gentleman.

*Frank.* What I saw of your behaviour was so just, it would admit of no misrepresentation. I only feared, whatever reason you had to conceal your name from me at Bath, you might have the same to do it now; and though my happiness was so nearly concerned, I rather chose to venture thus abruptly after you, than be impertinently inquisitive.

*Cla.* Sir, there seems to be so much civility in your rudeness, that I can easily forgive it;—though I don't see how your happiness is at all concerned.

*Frank.* No, madam! I believe you are the only lady, who could, with the qualifications you are mistress of, be sensible of the power they give you over the happiness of our sex.

*Cla.* How vain should we women be, if you gentlemen were but wise! If you did not all of you say the same things to every woman, we should certainly be foolish enough to believe some of you were in earnest.

*Frank.* Could you have the least sense of what I feel whilst I am speaking, you would know me to be in earnest, and what I say to be the dictates of a heart that admires you; may I not say that—

*Cla.* Sir, this is carrying the———

*Frank.* When I danced with you at Bath, I was charmed with your whole behaviour, and felt the same tender admiration! but my hope of seeing you afterwards, kept in my passion till a more proper time should offer. You cannot, therefore, blame me now, if, after having lost you once, I do not suffer an inexcusable modesty to prevent my making use of this second opportunity.

*Cla.* This behaviour, sir, is so different from the gaiety of your conversation then, that I am at a loss how to answer you.

*Frank.* There is nothing, madam, which could take off from the gaiety with which your presence inspires every heart, but the fear of losing you. How can I be otherwise than as I am, when I know not but you may leave London as abruptly as you did Bath?

*Enter* LUCETTA.

*Luc.* Madam, the tea is ready, and my mistress waits for you.

*Cla.* Very well, I come—[*Exit* LUCETTA.] You see, sir, I am called away: but I hope you will excuse it, when I leave you with an assurance, that the business, which brings me to town, will keep me here some time.

*Frank.* How generous it is in you thus to ease the heart, that knew not how to ask for such a favour!—I fear to offend—But this house, I suppose, is yours?

*Cla.* You will hear of me, if not find me here.

*Frank.* I then take my leave. [*Exit* FRANK.

*Cla.* I'm undone!——He has me!

*Enter* MRS STRICTLAND.

*Mrs Strict.* Well; how do you find yourself?

*Cla.* I do find——that, if he goes on as he has begun, I shall certainly have him without giving him the least uneasiness.

*Mrs Strict.* A very terrible prospect, indeed!

*Cla.* But I must tease him a little——Where is Jacintha? how will she laugh at me, if I become a pupil of hers, and learn to give ease! No; positively I shall never do it.

*Mrs Strict.* Poor Jacintha has met with what I feared from Mr Strictland's temper; an utter denial. I know not why, but he really grows more and more ill-natured.

*Cla.* Well; now do I heartily wish my affairs were in his power a little, that I might have a few difficulties to surmount: I love difficulties; and yet, I don't know—it is as well as it is.

*Mrs Strict.* Ha, ha, ha! Come, the tea waits. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter* MR STRICTLAND.

*Strict.* These doings in my house distract me. I met a fine gentleman: when I inquired who he was, why, he came to Clarinda. I shall not be easy till she is decamped. My wife had the character of a virtuous woman—and they have not been long acquainted: but then they were by themselves at Bath——That hurts——that hurts——they must be watched, they must; I know them, I know all their wiles, and the best of them are but hypocrites——Ha!—[LUCETTA *passes over the stage.*] Suppose I bribe the maid: she is of their council, the manager of their secrets: it shall be so; money will do it, and I shall know all that passes. Lucetta!

*Luc.* Sir.

*Strict.* Lucetta!

*Re-enter* LUCETTA.

*Luc.* Sir! If he should suspect, and search me now, I'm undone. [*Aside.*

*Strict.* She is a sly girl, and may be serviceable. [*Aside.*] Lucetta, you are a good girl, and have an honest face. I like it. It looks as if it carried no deceit in it—Yet, if she should be false, she can do me most harm. [*Aside.*

*Luc.* Pray, sir, speak out.

*Strict.* [*Aside.*] No; she is a woman, and it is the highest imprudence to trust her.

*Luc.* I am not able to understand you.

*Strict.* I am glad of it. I would not have you understand me.

*Luc.* Then, what did you call me for?—If he should be in love with my face, it would be rare sport. [*Aside.*

*Strict.* Tester, ay, Tester is the proper person. [*Aside.*] Lucetta, tell Tester I want him.

*Luc.* Yes, sir. Mighty odd, this! It gives me time, however, to send Buckle with this letter to his master. [*Aside. Exit.*

*Strict.* Could I but be once well satisfied that my wife had really finished me, I believe I should be as quiet as if I were sure to the contrary: but, whilst I am in doubt, I am miserable.

*Enter* TESTER.

*Test.* Does your honour please to want me?

*Strict.* Ay, Tester——I need not fear. The honesty of his service, and the goodness of his look, make me secure. I will trust him. [*Aside.*] Tester, I think I have been a tolerable good master to you.

*Test.* Yes, sir,———very tolerable.

*Strict.* I like his simplicity well. It promises honesty. [*Aside.*] I have a secret, Tester, to impart to you; a thing of the greatest importance. Look upon me, and don't stand picking your fingers.

*Test.* Yes, sir.—No, sir.

*Strict.* But will not his simplicity expose him the more to Lucetta's cunning? Yes, yes; she will worm the secret out of him. I had better trust her with it at once.—So I will. [*Aside.*] Tester, go, send Lucetta hither.

*Test.* Yes, sir———Here she is.

*Re-enter* LUCETTA.

Lucetta, my master wants you.

*Strict.* Get you down, Tester.

*Test.* Yes, sir. [*Exit.*

*Luc.* If you want me, sir, I beg you would make haste, for I have a thousand things to do.

*Strict.* Well, well; what I have to say will not take up much time, could I but persuade you to be honest.

*Luc.* Why, sir, I hope you don't suspect my honesty?

*Strict.* Well, well: I believe you honest. [*Shuts the door.*

*Luc.* What can be at the bottom of all this? [*Aside.*

*Strict.* So; we cannot be too private. Come hither, hussy; nearer yet.

*Luc.* Lord, sir! You are not going to be rude? I vow I will call out.

*Strict.* Hold your tongue—Does the baggage laugh at me? She does; she mocks me, and will reveal it to my wife; and her insolence upon it will be more insupportable to me than cuckoldom itself. [*Aside.*] I have not leisure now, Lucetta—Some other time—Hush! Did not the bell ring? Yes, yes; my wife wants you. Go, go, go to her. [*Pushes her out.*] There is no hell on earth like being a slave to suspicion. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*The Piazza, Covent-Garden.*

*Enter* BELLAMY *and* JACK MEGGOT.

*Bel.* Nay, nay, I would not put your family into any confusion.

*J. Meg.* None in life, my dear, I assure you. I will go and order every thing this instant for her reception.

*Bel.* You are too obliging, sir; but you need not be in this hurry, for I am in no certainty when I shall trouble you; I only know, that my Jacintha has taken such a resolution.

*J. Meg.* Therefore, we should be prepared; for, when once a lady has such a resolution in her head, she is upon the rack till she executes it. 'Foregad, Mr Bellamy, this must be a girl of fire.

*Enter* FRANKLY.

*Frank.* Buxom and lively as the bounding doe!—Fair as painting can express, or youthful poets fancy, when they love! Tol, de rol, lol! [*Singing and dancing.*

*Bel.* Who is this you talk thus rapturously of?

*Frank.* Who should it be, but—I shall know her name to-morrow. [*Sings and dances.*

*J. Meg.* What is the matter, ho? Is the man mad?

*Frank.* Even so, gentlemen; as mad as love and joy can make me.

*Bel.* But inform us whence this joy proceeds.

*Frank.* Joy! joy! my lads! She's found! my Perdita! my charmer!

*J. Meg.* Egad! her charms have bewitched the man, I think!——But who is she?

*Bel.* Come, come, tell us, who is this wonder?

*Frank* But will you say nothing?

*Bel.* Nothing, as I live.

*Frank.* Nor you?

*J. Meg.* I'll be as silent as the grave——

*Frank.* With a tomb-stone upon it, to tell every one whose dust it carries.

*J. Meg.* I'll be as secret as a debauched prude——

*Frank.* Whose sanctity every one suspects. Jack, Jack, 'tis not in thy nature; keeping a secret is worse to thee than keeping thy accounts. But to leave fooling, listen to me both, that I may whisper it into your ears, that echo may not catch the sinking sound——I cannot tell who she is, faith—Tol de rol, lol——

*J. Meg.* Mad! mad! very mad!

*Frank.* All I know of her is, that she is a charming woman, and has given me liberty to visit her again——Bellamy, 'tis she, the lovely she! [*Aside.*

*Bel.* So I did suppose. [*To* FRANK.

*J. Meg.* Poor Charles! for Heaven's sake, Mr Bellamy, persuade him to go to his chamber, whilst I prepare every thing for you at home. Adieu. [*Aside to* BEL.] B'ye Charles; ha, ha, ha! [*Exit.*

*Frank.* Oh, love! thou art a gift worthy of a god, indeed! dear Bellamy, nothing could add to my pleasure, but to see my friend as deep in love as I am.

*Bel.* I shew my heart is capable of love, by the friendship it bears to you.

*Frank.* The light of friendship looks but dim before the brighter flame of love: love is the spring of cheerfulness and joy. Why, how dull and phlegmatic do you shew to me now! whilst I am all life; light as feathered Mercury—You, dull and cold as earth and water; I, light and warm as air and fire. These are the only elements in love's world! Why, Bellamy, for shame! get thee a mistress, and be sociable.

*Bel.* Frankly, I am now going to——

*Frank.* Why that face now? Your humble servant, sir. My flood of joy shall not be stopped by your melancholy fits, I assure you. [*Going.*

*Bel.* Stay, Frankly; I beg you stay. What would you say now, if I really were in love?

*Frank.* Why, faith, thou hast such romantic notions of sense and honour, that I know not what to say.

*Bel.* To confess the truth, then, I am in love.

*Frank.* And do you confess it as if it were a sin? Proclaim it aloud; glory in it; boast of it as your greatest virtue; swear it with a lover's oath, and I will believe you.

*Bel.* Why, then, by the bright eyes of her I love——

*Frank.* Well said!

*Bel.* By all that's tender, amiable, and soft in woman——

*Frank.* Bravo!

*Bel.* I swear, I am as true an enamorato as ever tagged rhyme.

*Frank.* And art thou, then, thoroughly in love? Come to my arms, thou dear companion of my joys!——

[*They embrace.*

*Enter* RANGER.

*Ran.* Why—Hey!—is there never a wench to be got for love or money?

*Bel.* Pshaw! Ranger here?

*Ran.* Yes, Ranger is here, and perhaps does not come so impertinently as you may imagine. Faith! I think I have the knack of finding out secrets. Nay, never look so queer——Here is a letter, Mr Bellamy, that seems to promise you better diversion than your hugging one another.

*Bel.* What do you mean?

*Ran.* Do you deal much in these paper-tokens?

*Bel.* Oh, the dear kind creature! it is from herself. [*To* FRANK.

*Ran.* What, is it a pair of laced shoes she wants? or have the boys broke her windows?

*Bel.* Hold your profane tongue!

*Frank.* Nay, prithee, Bellamy, don't keep it to yourself, as if her whole affections were contained in those few lines.

*Ran.* Prithee, let him alone to his silent raptures. But it is as I always said—your grave men ever are the greatest whoremasters.

*Bel.* I cannot be disobliged now, say what you will. But how came this into your hands?

*Ran.* Your servant Buckle and I changed commissions; he went on my errand, and I came on his.

*Bel.* 'Sdeath! I want him this very instant.

*Ran.* He will be here presently; but I demand to know what I have brought you?

*Frank.* Ay, ay! out with it! you know we never blab, and may be of service.

*Bel.* Twelve o'clock! oh, the dear hour!

*Ran.* Why, it is a pretty convenient time, indeed.

*Bel.* By all that's happy, she promises in this letter here——to leave her guardian this very night——and run away with me.

*Ran.* How is this?

*Bel.* Nay, I know not how myself—she says at the bottom—'Your servant has full instruc-'tions from Lucetta how to equip me for my ex-'pedition. I will not trust myself home with 'you to-night, because I know it is inconvenient; 'therefore, I beg you would procure me a lodg-'ing; it is no matter how far off my guardian's.

Yours, JACINTHA.'

*Ran.* Carry her to a bagnio, and there you may lodge with her.

*Frank.* Why, this must be a girl of spirit, faith!

*Bel.* And beauty equal to her sprightliness. I love her, and she loves me. She has thirty thousand pounds to her fortune.

*Ran.* The devil she has!

*Bel.* And never pla y at cards.

*Ran.* Nor does ar yone thing like any other woman, I suppose?

*Frank.* Not so, I hope, neither.

*Bel.* Oh, Frankly, Ranger, I never felt such ease before! the secret's out, and you don't laugh at me.

*Frank.* Laugh at thee, for loving a woman with thirty thousand pounds? thou art a most unaccountable fellow!

*Ran.* How the devil could he work her up to this! I never could have had the face to have done it. But—I don't know how—there is a degree of assurance in you modest gentlemen, which we impudent fellows never can come up to.

*Bel.* Oh! your servant, good sir. You should not abuse me now, Ranger, but do all you can to assist me.

*Ran.* Why, look ye, Bellamy, I am a damnable unlucky fellow, and so will have nothing to do in this affair: I'll take care to be out of the way, so as to do you no harm; that's all I can answer for; and so—success attend you. [*Going.*] I cannot leave you quite to yourself neither; for if this should prove a round-house affair, as I make no doubt it will, I believe I may have more interest there than you; and so, sir, you may hear of me at—— [*Whispers.*

*Bel.* For shame, Ranger! the most noted gaming-house in town.

*Ran.* Forgive me this once, my boy. I must go, faith, to pay a debt of honour to some of the greatest rascals in town. [*Exit* RAN.

*Frank.* But where do you design to lodge her?

*Bel.* At Mr Meggot's—He is already gone to prepare for her reception.

*Frank.* The properest place in the world: his aunts will entertain her with honour.

*Bel.* And the newness of her acquaintance will prevent its being suspected. Frankly, give me your hand: this is a very critical time.

*Frank.* Pho! none of your musty reflections now! When a man is in love, to the very brink of matrimony, what the devil has he to do with Plutarch and Seneca? Here is your servant, with a face full of business—I'll leave you together—I shall be at the King's Arms, where, if you want my assistance, you may find me. [*Exit* FRANK.

*Enter* BUCKLE.

*Bel.* So, Buckle, you seem to have your hands full.

*Buckle.* Not fuller than my head, sir, I promise you. You have had your letter, I hope?

*Bel.* Yes, and in it she refers me to you for my instructions.

*Buckle.* Why, the affair stands thus. As Mr Strictland sees the door locked and barred every night himself, and takes the key up with him, it is impossible for us to escape any way but through the window; for which purpose, I have a ladder of ropes.

*Bel.* Good.

*Buckle.* And because a hoop, as the ladies wear them now, is not the most decent dress to come down a ladder in, I have, in this other bundle, a suit of boy's clothes, which, I believe, will fit her; at least, it will serve the time she wants it. You will soon be for pulling it off, I suppose.

*Bel.* Why, you are in spirits, you rogue.

*Buckle.* These I am now to convey to Lucetta—Have you any thing to say, sir?

*Bel.* Nothing, but that I will not fail at the hour appointed. Bring me word to Mr Meggot's how you go on. Succeed in this, and it shall make your fortune.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The street before Mr* STRICTLAND'S *house.*

*Enter* BELLAMY *in a chairman's coat.*

*Bel.* How tediously have these minutes passed these last few hours! and the envious rogues will fly, no lightning quicker, when we would have them stay. Hold, let me not mistake—— this is the house. [*Pulls out his watch.*] By Heaven, it is not yet the hour! I hear somebody coming. The moon's so bright—I had better not be here till the happy instant comes.

[*Exit* BEL.

*Enter* FRANKLY.

*Frank.* Wine is no antidote to love, but rather feeds the flame: Now am I such an amorous puppy, that I cannot walk straight home, but must come out of my way to take a view of my queen's palace by moonlight—Ay, here stands the temple where my goddess is adored—the doors open!

[*Retires.*

*Enter* LUCETTA.

*Luc.* [*Under the window.*] Madam, madam, hist! madam—How shall I make her hear?

JACINTHA, *in boy's clothes, at the window.*

*Jac.* Who is there? What's the matter?

*Luc.* It is I, madam: you must not pretend to stir till I give the word; you'll be discovered if you do——

*Frank.* [*Aside.*] What do I see? A man!—My heart misgives me.

*Luc.* My master is below, sitting up for Mrs Clarinda. He raves as if he were mad about her being out so late.

*Frank.* [*Aside.*] Here is some intrigue or other.

I must see more of this before I give further way to love.

*Luc.* One minute he is in the street; the next he is in the kitchen: now he will lock her out, and then he'll wait himself, and see what figure she makes when she vouchsafes to venture home.

*Jac.* I long to have it over. Get me but once out of his house.

*Frank.* [*Aside.*] Cowardly rascal! would I were in his place!

*Luc.* If I can but fix him any where, I can let you out myself———You have the ladder ready in case of necessity?

*Jac.* Yes, yes. [*Exit* LUC.

*Frank.* [*Aside.*] The ladder! This must lead to some discovery; I shall watch you, my young gentleman, I shall.

*Enter* CLARINDA *and Servant.*

*Cla.* This whist is a most enticing devil. I am afraid I'm too late for Mr Strictland's sober hours.

*Jac.* Ha! I hear a noise!

*Cla.* No; I see a light in Jacintha's window. You may go home. [*Giving the servant money.*] I am safe.

*Jac.* Sure it must be he! Mr Bellamy—sir.

*Frank.* [*Aside.*] Does he not call me?

*Cla.* [*Aside.*] Ha! Who's that? I am frightened out of my wits———A man!

*Jac.* Is it you?

*Frank.* Yes, yes; 'tis I, 'tis I.

*Jac.* Listen at the door.

*Frank.* I will; 'tis open—There is no noise: all's quiet.

*Cla.* Sure it is my spark—and talking to Jacintha. [*Aside.*

*Frank.* You may come down the ladder——quick.

*Jac.* Catch it, then, and hold it.

*Frank.* I have it. Now I shall see what sort of mettle my young spark is made of. [*Aside.*

*Cla.* With a ladder, too! I'll assure you.—But I must see the end of it. [*Aside.*

*Jac.* Hark! Did not somebody speak?

*Frank.* No, no; be not fearful—'Sdeath! we are discovered.

[FRANKLY *and* CLARINDA *retire.*

*Enter* LUCETTA.

*Luc.* Hist! hist! are you ready?

*Jac.* Yes, may I venture?

*Luc.* Now is your time. He is in high conference with his privy counsellor, Mr Tester.—You may come down the back stairs, and I'll let you out. [*Exit* LUCETTA.

*Jac.* I will, I will; and am heartily glad of it. [*Exit* JAC.

*Frank.* [*Advancing.*] May be so: but you and I shall have a few words before you get off so cleanly.

*Cla.* [*Advancing.*] How lucky it was I came home at this instant. I shall spoil his sport I believe. Do you know me, sir?

*Frank.* I am amazed! You here! This was unexpected, indeed!

*Cla.* Why, I believe, I do come a little unexpectedly, but I shall amaze you more. I know the whole course of your amour: all the process of your mighty passion, from its first rise——

*Frank.* What is all this!

*Cla.* To the very conclusion, which you vainly hope to effect this night.

*Frank.* By Heaven, madam, I know not what you mean! I came hither purely to contemplate on your beauties.

*Cla.* Any beauties, sir, I find, will serve your turn. Did I not hear you talk to her at the window?

*Frank.* Her!

*Cla.* Blush, blush, for shame! but be assured you have seen the last both of Jacintha and me. [*Exit.*

*Frank.* Jacintha, hear me, madam—She is gone. This must certainly be Bellamy's mistress, and I have fairly ruined all the scheme.—This it is to be in luck.

*Enter* BELLAMY, *behind.*

*Bel.* Ha! a man under the window!

*Frank.* No, here she comes, and I may convey her to him.

*Enter* JACINTHA, *and runs to* FRANKLY.

*Jac.* I have at last got to you. Let us haste away—Oh!

*Frank.* Be not frightened, lady.

*Jac.* Oh! I am abused! betrayed!

*Bel.* Betrayed!——Frankly!

*Frank.* Bellamy!

*Bel.* I can scarce believe it though I see it.—Draw——

*Frank.* Hear me, Bellamy—lady———

*Jac.* Stay—do not fight!

*Frank.* I am innocent; it is all a mistake!

*Jac.* For my sake, be quiet! We shall be discovered! the family is alarmed!

*Bel.* You are obeyed. Mr Frankly, there is but one way——

*Frank.* I understand you. Any time but now. You will certainly be discovered! To-morrow at your chambers.

*Bel.* Till then, farewell.

[*Exeunt* BEL. *and* JAC.

*Frank.* Then, when he is cool, I may be heard; and the real, though suspicious, account of this matter may be believed. Yet, amidst all this perplexity, it pleases me to find my fair incognita is jealous of my love.

*Strict.* [*Within.*] Where's Lucetta? Search every place.

*Frank.* Hark! the cry is up! I must be gone. [*Exit* FRANK.

*Enter* MR STRICTLAND, TESTER, *and Servants.*

*Strict.* She's gone! she's lost! I am cheated! pursue her! seek her!

*Test.* Sir, all her clothes are in her chamber.

*Ser.* Sir, Mrs Clarinda said she was in boy's clothes.

*Strict.* Ay, ay, I know it—Bellamy has her—Come along—Pursue her. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter* RANGER.

*Ran.* Hark!——Was not the noise this way? No, there is no game stirring. This same goddess, Diana, shines so bright with her chastity, that, egad, I believe the wenches are ashamed to look her in the face. Now am I in an admirable mood for a frolic: have wine in my head, and money in my pocket, and so am furnished out for the cannonading of any countess in Christendom. Ha! what have we here! a ladder! this cannot be placed here for nothing——and a window open! Is it love or mischief now that is going on within? I care not which—I am in a right cue for either. Up I go, neck or nothing. Stay—do I not run a greater chance of spoiling sport, than I do of making any? that I hate, as much as I love the other. There can be no harm in seeing how the land lies—I'll up.—[*Goes up softly.*] All is hush———Ha! a light, and a woman! by all that's lucky, neither old nor crooked! I'll in———Ha! she is gone again! I will after her. [*Gets in at the window.*] And for fear of the squalls of virtue, and the pursuit of the family, I will make sure of the ladder. Now, Fortune, be my guide!

SCENE II.—MRS STRICTLAND'S *dressing-room.*

*Enter* MRS STRICTLAND, *followed by* LUCETTA.

*Mrs Strict.* Well, I am in great hopes she will escape.

*Luc.* Never fear, madam; the lovers have the start of him, and I warrant they keep it.

*Mrs Strict.* Were Mr Strictland ever to suspect my being privy to her flight, I know not what might be the consequence.

*Luc.* Then you had better be undressing. He may return immediately.

[*As she is sitting down at the toilet,* RANGER *enters behind.*]

*Ran.* Young and beautiful. [*Aside.*

*Luc.* I have watched him pretty narrowly of late, and never once suspected till this morning——

*Mrs Strict.* And who gave you authority to watch his actions, or pry into his secrets?

*Luc.* I hope, madam, you are not angry. I thought it might have been of service to you to know my master was jealous.

*Ran.* And her husband jealous! If she does but send away the maid, I am happy.

*Mrs Strict.* [*Angrily.*] Leave me.

*Luc.* This it is to middle with other people's affairs. [*Exit in anger.*

*Ran.* What a lucky dog I am! I never made a gentleman a cuckold before. Now, impudence, assist me!

*Mrs Strict.* [*Rising.*] Provoking! I am sure I never have deserved it of him.

*Ran.* Oh, cuckold him by all means, madam; I am your man! [*She shrieks.*] Oh, fy, madam! if you squall so cursedly, you will be discovered.

*Mrs Strict.* Discovered! What mean you, sir! do you come to abuse me?

*Ran.* I'll do my endeavour, madam; you can have no more.

*Mrs Strict.* Whence came you? How got you here?

*Ran.* Dear madam, so long as I'm here, what signifies how I got here, or whence I came? but that I may satisfy your curiosity, first, as to your whence came you? I answer, out of the street: and to your how got you here? I say, in at the window: it stood so invitingly open, it was irresistible. But, madam——you were going to undress. I beg I may not incommode you.

*Mrs Strict.* This is the most consummate piece of impudence!——

*Ran.* For Heaven's sake, have one drop of pity for a poor young fellow, who has long loved you.

*Mrs Strict.* What would the fellow have?

*Ran.* Your husband's usage will excuse you to the world.

*Mrs Strict.* I cannot bear this insolence! Help! Help!

*Ran.* Oh, hold that clamorous tongue, madam! Speak one word more, and I am gone, positively gone.

*Mrs Strict.* Gone! So I would have you.

*Ran.* Lord, madam, you are so hasty!

*Mrs Strict.* Shall I not speak, when a thief, a robber, breaks into my house at midnight! Help! help!

*Ran.* Ha! no one hears. Now, Cupid assist me!—Look ye, madam, I never could make fine speeches, and cringe, and bow, and fawn, and flatter, and lie. I have said more to you already, than ever I said to a woman in such circumstances in all my life. But since I find you will yield to no persuasion to your good, I will gently force you to be grateful. [*Throws down his hat, and seizes her.*] Come, come, unbend that brow, and look more kindly on me!

*Mrs Strict.* For shame, sir! Thus on my knees let me beg for mercy. [*Kneeling.*

*Ran.* And thus on mine, let me beg the same. [*He kneels, catches, and kisses her.*

*Strict.* [*Within.*] Take away her sword! she'll hurt herself!

*Mrs Strict.* Oh, Heavens! that's my husband's voice!

*Ran.* [*Rising.*] The devil it is!

*Strict.* ]*Within.*] Take away her sword, I say, and then I can close with her.

*Mrs Strict.* He is upon the stairs, now coming up! I am undone, if he sees you!

*Ran.* Pox on him, I must decamp then. Which way?

*Mrs Strict.* Through this passage into the next chamber.

*Ran.* And so into the street. With all my heart. You may be perfectly easy, madam: mum's the word; I never blab. [*Aside.*] I shall not leave off so, but wait till the last moment.

[*Exit* RANGER.

*Mrs Strict.* So, he's gone. What could I have said, if he had been discovered!

*Enter* MR STRICTLAND *driving in* JACINTHA, LUCETTA *following.*

*Strict.* Once more, my pretty masculine madam, you are welcome to home; and I hope to keep you somewhat closer than I have done; for to-morrow morning, eight o'clock, is the latest hour you shall stay in this lewd town.

*Jac.* Oh, sir; when once a girl is equipped with a hearty resolution, it is not your worship's sagacity, nor the great chain at your gate, can hinder her from doing what she has a-mind.

*Strict.* Oh, Lord! Lord! how this love improves a young lady's modesty!

*Jac.* Am I to blame to seek for happiness any where, when you are resolved to make me miserable here?

*Strict.* I have this night prevented your making yourself so; and will endeavour to do it for the future. I have you safe now, and the devil shall not get you out of my clutches again. I have locked the doors, and barred them, I warrant you. So, here—[*Giving her a candle.*]—Troop to your chamber, and to bed, while you are well. Go!—[*He treads on* RANGER'S *hat.*]—What's here? A hat! A man's hat in my wife's dressing-room!

[*Looking at the hat.*

*Mrs Strict.* What shall I do? [*Aside.*

*Strict.* [*Taking up the hat, and looking at* MRS STRICTLAND.]—Ha! By hell, I see 'tis true!

*Mrs Strict.* My fears confound me! I dare not tell the truth, and know not how to frame a lie! [*Aside.*

*Strict.* Mrs Strictland, Mrs Strictland, how came this hat into your chamber?

*Luc.* Are you that way disposed, my fine lady, and will not trust me? [*Aside.*

*Strict.* Speak, wretch, speak——

*Jac.* I could not have suspected this. [*Aside.*

*Strict.* Why dost thou not speak?

*Mrs Strict.* Sir——

*Strict.* Guilt—'tis guilt that ties your tongue!

*Luc.* I must bring her off, however. No chamber-maid can help it. [*Aside.*

*Strict.* My fears are just, and I am miserable—Thou worst of women!

*Mrs Strict.* I know my innocence, and can bear this no longer.

*Strict.* I know you are false, and 'tis I how will bear my injuries no longer.

[*Both walk about in a passion.*

*Luc.* [*To* JACINTHA *aside.*]—Is not the hat yours? own it, madam.

[*Takes away* JACINTHA'S *hat, and exit.*

*Mrs Strict.* What ground, what cause have you for jealousy, when you yourself can witness, your leaving me was accidental, your return uncertain; and expected even sooner than it happened? The abuse is gross and palpable.

*Strict.* Why, this is true!

*Mrs Strict.* Indeed, Jacintha, I am innocent.

*Strict.* And yet this hat must belong to somebody.

*Jac.* Dear Mrs Strictland, be not concerned. When he has diverted himself a little longer with it——

*Strict.* Ha!

*Jac.* I suppose he will give me my hat again.

*Strict.* Your hat!

*Jac.* Yes, my hat. You brushed it from my side yourself, and then trod upon it; whether on purpose to abuse this lady or no, you best know yourself.

*Strict.* It cannot be—'tis all a lie.

*Jac.* Believe so still, with all my heart; but the hat is mine. Now, sir, who does it belong to? [*Snatches it, and puts it on.*

*Strict.* Why did she look so?

*Jac.* Your violence of temper is too much for her. You use her ill, and then suspect her for that confusion which you yourself occasion.

*Strict.* Why did not you set me right at first?

*Jac.* Your hard usage of me, sir, is a sufficient reason why I should not be much concerned to undeceive you at all. 'Tis for your lady's sake I do it now, who deserves much better of you than to be thus exposed for every slight suspicion.—See where she sits—Go to her.

*Mrs Strict.* [*Rising.*]—Indeed, Mr Strictland, I have a soul as much above——

*Strict.* Whew! Now you have both found your tongues, and I must bear with their eternal rattle.

*Jac.* For shame, sir! go to her, and——

*Strict.* Well, well; what shall I say? I forgive—all is over. I, I, I forgive.

*Mrs Strict.* Forgive! What do you mean?

*Jac.* Forgive her! Is that all? Consider, sir—

*Strict.* Hold, hold your confounded tongues, and I'll do any thing. I'll ask pardon—or forgive—or any thing. Good now, be quiet—I ask your pardon—there—[*Kisses her.*]—For you, madam, I am infinitely obliged to you, and I could find in my heart to make you a return in kind, by marrying you to a beggar, but I have more conscience. Come, come; to your chamber.—Here, take this candle.

*Enter* LUCETTA *pertly.*

*Luc.* Sir, if you please, I will light my young lady to bed.

*Strict.* No, no! no such thing, good madam. She shall have nothing but her pillow to consult this night, I assure you. So, in, in.—[*The ladies take leave. Exit* JACINTHA.]—Good night, kind madam.

*Luc.* Pox of the jealous fool! We might both have escaped out of the window, purely, [*Aside.*

*Strict.* Go! get you down; and, do you hear, order the coach to be ready in the morning at eight, exactly.—[*Exit* LUCETTA.]—So, she is safe till to-morrow, and then for the country; and, when she is there, I can manage as I think fit.

*Mrs Strict.* Dear Mr Strictland——

*Strict.* I am not in a humour, Mrs Strictland, fit to talk with you. Go to bed. I will endeavour to get the better of my temper, if I can; I'll follow you.—[*Exit* MRS STRICTLAND.]—How despicable have I made myself! [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Another chamber.*

*Enter* RANGER.

*Ran.* All seems hushed again, and I may venture out. I may as well sneak off whilst I am in a whole skin. And, shall so much love and claret as I am in possession of, only lull me to sleep, when it might so much better keep me waking? Forbid it fortune, and forbid it love. This is a chamber, perhaps, of some bewitching female, and I may yet be happy. Ha! A light! The door opens. A boy! Pox on him!

[*He retires.*

*Enter* JACINTHA *with a candle.*

*Jac.* I have been listening at the door, and, from their silence, I conclude they are peaceably gone to bed together.

*Ran.* A pretty boy, faith! he seems uneasy. [*Aside.*

*Jac.* [*Sitting down.*]—What an unlucky night has this proved to me! Every circumstance has fallen out unhappily.

*Ran.* He talks aloud. I'll listen. [*Aside.*

*Jac.* But what most amazes me is, that Clarinda should betray me!

*Ran.* Clarinda! She must be a woman. Well, what of her? [*Aside.*

*Jac.* My guardian, else, would never have suspected my disguise.

*Ran.* Disguise! Ha, it must be so! What eyes she has! What a dull rogue was I not to suspect this sooner! [*Aside.*

*Jac.* Ha! I had forgot; the ladder is at the window still, and I will boldly venture by myself. —[*Rising briskly, sees* RANGER.]—Ha! A man, and well drest! Ha, Mrs Strictland! Are you then at last dishonest!

*Ran.* By all my wishes, she is a charming woman! Lucky rascal! [*Aside.*

*Jac.* But I will, if possible, conceal her shame, and stand the brunt of his impertinence.

*Ran.* What shall I say to her? No matter; any thing soft will do the business. [*Aside.*

*Jac.* Who are you?

*Ran.* A man, young gentleman.

*Jac.* And what would you have?

*Ran.* A woman.

*Jac.* You are very free, sir. Here are none for you.

*Ran.* Ay, but there is one, and a fair one, too; the most charming creature nature ever set her hand to; and you are the dear little pilot that must direct me to her heart.

*Jac.* What mean you, sir? It is an office I am not accustomed to.

*Ran.* You won't have far to go, however. I never make my errands tedious. It is to your own heart, dear madam, I would have you whisper in my behalf. Nay, never start. Think you such beauty could ever be concealed from eyes so well acquainted with its charms?

*Jac.* What will become of me! If I cry out, Mrs Strictland is undone. This is my last resort. [*Aside.*

*Ran.* Pardon, dear lady, the boldness of this visit, which your guardian's care has forced me to: but I long have loved you, long have doated on that beauteous face, and followed you from place to place, though, perhaps, unknown and unregarded.

*Jac.* Here's a special fellow! [*Aside.*

*Ran.* Turn, then, an eye of pity on my sufferings; and, by Heaven, one tender look from those piercing eyes, one touch of this soft hand—

[*Going to take her hand.*

*Jac.* Hold, sir! no nearer.

*Ran.* Would more than repay whole years of pain.

*Jac.* Hear me; but keep your distance, or I raise the family.

*Ran.* Blessings on her tongue, only for prattling to me! [*Aside.*

*Jac.* Oh, for a moment's courage, and I shall shame him from his purpose. [*Aside.*] If I were certain so much gallantry had been shewn on my account only——

*Ran.* You wrong your beauty to think, that any other could have power to draw me hither. By all the little loves that play about your lips, I swear——

*Jac.* You came to me, and me alone?

*Ran.* By all the thousand graces that inhabit there, you, and only you, have drawn me hither.

*Jac.* Well said—Could I but believe you——

*Ran.* By Heaven, she comes! Ah, honest Ranger, I never knew thee fail. [*Aside.*

*Jac.* Pray, sir, where did you leave this hat?

*Ran.* That hat! that hat—'tis my hat—I dropt it in the next chamber as I was looking for yours.

*Jac.* How mean and despicable do you look now!

*Ran.* So, so! I am in a pretty pickle! [*Aside.*

*Jac.* You know by this, that I am acquainted with every thing that has passed within, and how ill it agrees with what you have professed to me. Let me advise you, sir, to be gone immediately: through that window, you may easily get into the street. One scream of mine, the least noise at that door, will wake the house.

*Ran.* Say you so? [*Aside.*

*Jac.* Believe me, sir, an injured husband is not so easily appeased, and a suspected wife that is jealous of her honour——

*Ran.* Is the devil; and so let's have no more of her. Look ye, madam, [*Getting between the door and her.*] I have but one argument left, and that is a strong one. Look on me well; I am as handsome, a strong, well made fellow as any about town; and, since we are alone, as I take it, we can have no occasion to be more private.

[*Going to lay hold of her.*

*Jac.* I have a reputation, sir, and will maintain it.

*Ran.* You have a bewitching pair of eyes.

*Jac.* Consider my virtue. [*Struggling.*

*Ran.* Consider your beauty, and my desires.

*Jac.* If I were a man, you dared not use me thus.

*Ran.* I should not have the same temptation.

*Jac.* Hear me, sir; I will be heard. [*Breaks from him.*] There is a man who will make you repent this usage of me. Oh, Bellamy! where art thou now?

*Ran.* Bellamy!

*Jac.* Were he here, you durst not thus affront me. [*Bursting into tears.*

*Ran.* His mistress, on my soul! [*Aside.*] You can love, madam; you can love, I find. Her tears affect me strangely. [*Aside.*

*Jac.* I am not ashamed to own my passion for a man of virtue and honour. I love, and glory in it.

*Ran.* Oh, brave! and you can write letters, you can. I will not trust myself home with you this evening, because I know it is inconvenient.

*Jac.* Ha!

*Ran.* Therefore I beg you would procure me a lodging; 'tis no matter how far off my guardian's. Yours, Jacintha.

*Jac.* The very words of my letter! I am amazed! Do you know Mr Bellamy?

*Ran.* There is not a man on earth I have so great a value for: and he must have some value for me, too, or he would never have shewn me your pretty epistle; think of that, fair lady. The ladder is at the window, and so, madam, I hope delivering you safe into his arms, will, in some measure, expiate the crime I have been guilty of to you.

*Jac.* Good Heaven! How fortunate is this!

*Ran.* I believe I make myself appear more wicked than I really am. For, damn me, if I do not feel more satisfaction in the thoughts of restoring you to my friend, than I could have pleasure in any favour your bounty could have bestowed. Let any other rake lay his hand upon his heart, and say the same.

*Jac.* Your generosity transports me!

*Ran.* Let us lose no time, then; the ladder's ready. Where was you to lodge?

*Jac.* At Mr Meggot's.

*Ran.* At my friend Jacky's! better and better still.

*Jac.* Are you acquainted with him, too?

*Ran.* Ay, ay; why, did I not tell you at first, that I was one of your old acquaintance? I know all about you, you see; though the devil fetch me if ever I saw you before! Now, madam, give me your hand.

*Jac.* And now, sir, have with you.

*Ran.* Then thou art a girl of spirit. And though I long to hug you for trusting yourself with me, I will not beg a single kiss, till Bellamy himself shall give me leave. He must fight well, that takes you from me. [*Exeunt.*

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.—*The Piazza.*

*Enter* BELLAMY *and* FRANKLY.

*Bel.* PSHA! what impertinent devil put it into your head to meddle with my affairs?

*Frank.* You know I went thither in pursuit of another.

*Bel.* I know nothing you had to do there at all.

*Frank.* I thought, Mr Bellamy, you were a lover.

*Bel.* I am so; and therefore should be forgiven this sudden warmth.

*Frank.* And therefore should forgive the fond impertinence of a lover.

*Bel.* Jealousy, you know, is as natural an incident to love——

*Frank.* As curiosity. By one piece of silly curiosity, I have gone nigh to ruin both myself and you; let not, then, your jealousy complete our misfortunes. I fear I have lost a mistress as well as you. Then let us not quarrel. All may come right again.

*Bel.* It is impossible. She is gone, removed for ever from my sight: she is in the country by this time.

*Frank.* How did you lose her after we parted?

*Bel.* By too great confidence. When I got her to my chair, the chairmen were not to be found. And, safe as I thought in our disguise,

I actually put her into the chair, when Mr Strictland and his servants were in sight; which I had no sooner done, than they surrounded us, overpowered me, and carried her away.

*Frank.* Unfortunate indeed! Could you not make a second attempt?

*Bel.* I had designed it; but when I came to the door, I found the ladder removed; and, hearing no noise, seeing no lights, nor being able to make any body answer, I concluded all attempts as impracticable as I now find them.——Ha! I see Lucetta coming. Then they may be still in town.

*Enter* LUCETTA.

Lucetta, welcome! what news of Jacintha?

*Luc.* News, sir! you fright me out of my senses! Why, is she not with you?

*Bel.* What do you mean? With me! I have not seen her since I lost her last night.

*Luc.* Good Heaven! then she is undone for ever.

*Frank.* Why, what's the matter?

*Bel.* Speak out—I'm all amazement!

*Luc.* She is escaped, without any of us knowing how. Nobody missed her till morning. We all thought she went away with you. But Heaven knows now what may have happened.

*Bel.* Somebody must have accompanied her in her flight.

*Luc.* We know of nobody: we are all in confusion at home. My master swears revenge on you. My mistress says a stranger has her.

*Bel.* A stranger!

*Luc.* But Mrs Clarinda——

*Bel.* Clarinda! Who is she?

*Luc.* [*To* FRANKLY.] The lady, sir, who you saw at our house last night.

*Frank.* Ha! what of her?

*Luc.* She says, she is sure one Frankly is the man; she saw them together, and knows it to be true.

*Frank.* Damned fortune! [*Aside.*

*Luc.* Sure this is not Mr Frankly.

*Frank.* Nothing will convince him now. [*Aside.*

*Bel.* [*Looking at* FRANKLY.] Ha! 'tis true!—I see it is true. [*Aside.*] Lucetta, run up to Buckle, and take him with you to search wherever you can. [*Puts her out.*] Now, Mr Frankly, I have found you.——You have used me so ill, that you force me to forget you are my friend.

*Frank.* What do you mean?

*Bel.* Draw!

*Frank.* Are you mad? By Heavens, I am innocent.

*Bel.* I have heard you, and will no longer be imposed on. Defend yourself!

*Frank.* Nay, if you are so hot, I draw to defend myself, as I would against a madman.

*Enter* RANGER.

*Ran.* What the devil, swords at noon-day! Have among you, faith! [*Parts them.*] What's here, Bellamy!——Yes, egad, you are Bellamy, and you are Frankly; put up, both of you——or else——I am a devilish fellow when once my sword is out.

*Bel.* We shall have a time——

*Ran.* [*Pushing* BELLAMY *one way.*] A time for what?

*Frank.* I shall be always as ready to defend my innocence as now.

*Ran.* [*Pushing* FRANKLY *the other way.*] Innocence! ay, to be sure—at your age—a mighty innocent fellow, no doubt. But what, in the name of common sense, is it that ails you both? are you mad? The last time I saw you, you were hugging and kissing; and now you are cutting one another's throats—I never knew any good come of one fellow's beslavering another—But I shall put you into better humour, I warrant you——Bellamy, Frankly, listen both of you—Such fortune—such a scheme——

*Bel.* Prithee, leave fooling. What, art drunk?

*Frank.* He is always so, I think.

*Ran.* And who gave you the privilege of thinking? Drunk! no; I am not drunk. Tipsy, perhaps, with my good fortune—merry, and in spirits—though I have not fire enough to run my friend through the body. Not drunk, though Jack Meggot and I have boxed it about—Champaign was the word for two whole hours, by Shrewsbury clock.

*Bel.* Jack Meggot! Why, I left him at one, going to bed.

*Ran.* That may be, but I made shift to rouse him and his family by four this morning. Ounds! I picked up a wench, and carried her to his house.

*Bel.* Ha!

*Ran.* Such a variety of adventures—Nay, you shall hear——But, before I begin, Bellamy, you shall promise me half a dozen kisses before hand: for the devil fetch me if that little jade, Jacintha, would give me one, though I pressed hard.

*Bel.* Who, Jacintha? press to kiss Jacintha?

*Ran.* Kiss her! ay; why not? is she not a woman, and made to be kissed?

*Bel.* Kiss her!—I shall run distracted!

*Ran.* How could I help it, when I had her alone, you rogue, in her bed-chamber, at midnight! if I had been to be sacrificed, I should have done it.

*Bel.* Bed-chamber, at midnight! I can hold no longer——Draw!

*Frank.* Be easy, Bellamy. [*Interposing.*

*Bel.* He has been at some of his damned tricks with her.

*Frank.* Hear him out.

*Ran.* 'Sdeath, how could I know she was his mistress? But I tell this story most miserably. I

should have told you first, I was in another lady's chamber. By the Lord, I got in at the window by a ladder of ropes!

*Frank.* Ha! Another lady?

*Ran.* Another: and stole in upon her whilst she was undressing; beautiful as an angel, blooming and young——

*Frank.* What, in the same house?

*Bel.* What is this to Jacintha? Ease me of my pain.

*Ran.* Ay, ay, in the same house, on the same floor. The sweetest little angel—But I design to have another touch with her.

*Frank.* 'Sdeath! but you shall have a touch upon me first.

*Bel.* Stay, Frankly. [*Interposing.*

*Ran.* Why, what strange madness has possessed you both, that nobody must kiss a pretty wench but yourselves?

*Bel.* What became of Jacintha?

*Ran.* Ounds! what have you done, that you must monopolize kissing?

*Frank.* Prithee, honest Ranger, ease me of the pain I am in. Was her name Clarinda?

*Bel.* Speak in plain words, where Jacintha is, where to be found. Dear boy, tell me.

*Ran.* Ay, now it is honest Ranger; and, dear boy, tell me—and a minute ago, my throat was to be cut——I could find in my heart not to open my lips. But here comes Jack Meggot, who will let you into all the secret, though he designed to keep it from you, in half the time that I can, though I had ever so great a mind to tell it you.

*Enter* JACK MEGGOT.

*J. Meg.* So, save ye, save ye, lads! we have been frightened out of our wits for you. Not hearing of Mr Bellamy, poor Jacintha is ready to sink for fear of any accident.

*Bel.* Is she at your house?

*J. Meg.* Why, did not you know that? We dispatched master Ranger to you three hours ago.

*Ran.* Ay, plague! but I had business of my own, so I could not come—Hark ye, Frankly, is your girl maid, wife, or widow?

*Frank.* A maid, I hope.

*Ran.* The odds are against you, Charles—— But mine is married, you rogue, and her husband jealous—The devil is in it if I do not reap some reward for my last night's service.

*Bel.* He has certainly been at Mrs Strictland herself. But, Frankly, I dare not look on you.

*Frank.* This one embrace cancels all thoughts of enmity.

*Bel.* Thou generous man!—But I must haste to ease Jacintha of her fears. [*Exit* BEL.

*Frank.* And I to make up matters with Clarinda. [*Exit* FRANK.

*Ran.* And I to some kind wench or other, Jack. But where shall I find her, Heaven knows. And so, my service to your monkey.

*J. Meg.* Adieu, rattlepate. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The hall of* MR STRICTLAND'S *house.*

*Enter* MRS STRICTLAND *and* CLARINDA.

*Mrs Strict.* But why in such a hurry, my dear? stay till your servants can go along with you.

*Cla.* Oh, no matter; they'll follow with my things. It is but a little way off, and my chair will guard me. After my staying out so late last night, I am sure Mr Strictland will think every minute an age whilst I am in his house.

*Mrs Strict.* I am as much amazed at his suspecting your innocence as my own; and every time I think of it, I blush at my present behaviour to you.

*Cla.* No ceremony, dear child.

*Mrs Strict.* No, Clarinda; I am too well acquainted with your good humour. But, I fear, in the eye of a malicious world, it may look like a confirmation of his suspicion.

*Cla.* My dear, if the world will speak ill of me for the little innocent gaiety, which I think the peculiar happiness of my temper, I know no way to prevent it, and am only sorry the world is so ill-natured: but I shall not part with my mirth, I assure them, so long as I know it innocent. I wish, my dear, this may be the greatest uneasiness your husband's jealousy ever gives you.

*Mrs Strict.* I hope he never again may have such occasion as he had last night.

*Cla.* You are so unfashionable a wife! Why, last night's accident would have made half the wives in London easy for life. Has not his jealousy discovered itself openly? And are not you innocent? There is nothing but your foolish temper that prevents his being absolutely in your power.

*Mrs Strict.* Clarinda, this is too serious an affair to laugh at. Let me advise you, take care of Mr Frankly, observe his temper well, and if he has the least taint of jealousy, cast him off, and never trust to keeping him in your power.

*Cla.* You will hear little more of Frankly, I believe. Here is Mr Strictland.

*Enter* MR STRICTLAND *and* LUCETTA.

*Strict.* Lucetta says you want me, madam.

*Cla.* I trouble you, sir, only that I might return you thanks for the civilities I have received in your family, before I took my leave.

*Strict.* Keep them to yourself, dear madam. As it is at my request that you leave my house, your thanks, upon that occasion, are not very desirable.

*Cla.* Oh, sir, you need not fear. My thanks were only for your civilities. They will not overburden you. But I'll conform to your humour, sir, and part with as little ceremony——

*Strict.* As we met.

*Cla.* The brute! [*Aside.*] My dear, good b'ye, we may meet again. [*To* MRS STRICT.

*Strict.* If you dare trust me with your hand.

*Cla.* Lucetta, remember my instructions. Now, sir, have with you.

[MR STRICTLAND *leads* CLARINDA *out.*

*Mrs Strict.* Are her instructions cruel or kind, Lucetta? For I suppose they relate to Mr Frankly.

*Luc.* Have you a mind to try if I can keep a secret as well as yourself, madam? But I will shew you I am fit to be trusted, by keeping this, though it signifies nothing.

*Mrs Strict.* This answer is not so civil, I think.

*Luc.* I beg pardon, madam, I meant it not to offend.

*Mrs Strict.* Pray let us have no more such. I neither desire, nor want your assistance.

*Re-enter* MR STRICTLAND.

*Strict.* She is gone; I feel myself somewhat easier already. Since I have begun the day with gallantry, madam, shall I conduct you up?

*Mrs Strict.* There is something, sir, which gives you secret uneasiness. I wish——

*Strict.* Perhaps so, madam; and perhaps it may soon be no secret at all. [*Leads her out.*

*Luc.* Would I were once well settled with my young lady! for, at present, this is but an odd sort of a queer family. Last night's affair puzzles me. A hat there was, that belonged to none of us, that's certain; madam was in a fright, that is as certain; and I brought all off. Jacintha escaped, no one of us knows how. The good man's jealousy was yesterday groundless; yet to-day, in my mind, he is very much in the right. Mighty odd, all this!—Somebody knocks. If this should be Clarinda's spark, I have an odd message for him, too. [*She opens the door.*

*Enter* FRANKLY.

*Frank.* So, my pretty handmaid, meeting with you gives me some hopes. May I speak with Clarinda?

*Luc.* Whom do you want, sir?

*Frank.* Clarinda, child. The young lady I was admitted to yesterday.

*Luc.* Clarinda! No such person lives here, I assure you.

*Frank.* Where, then?

*Luc.* I don't know, indeed, sir.

*Frank.* Will you inquire within?

*Luc.* Nobody knows in this house, sir, you will find.

*Frank.* What do you mean? She is a friend of Jacintha's, your lady. I will take my oath she was here last night; and you yourself spoke of her being here this morning—Not know!

*Luc.* No; none of us know. She went away of a sudden—no one of us can imagine whither.

*Frank.* Why, faith, child, thou hast a tolerable face, and hast delivered this denial very handsomely: but let me tell you, your impertinence this morning had like to have cost me my life now, therefore, make me amends. I come from your young mistress; I come from Mr Bellamy; I come with my purse full of gold, that persuasive rhetoric, to win you to let me see and speak to this Clarinda once again.

*Luc.* She is not here, sir.

*Frank.* Direct me to her.

*Luc.* No; I cannot do that, neither.

*Enter* MR STRICTLAND *behind.*

*Strict.* I heard a knocking at the door, and a man's voice—Ha! [*Aside.*

*Frank.* Deliver this letter to her.

*Strict.* By all my fears, a letter! [*Aside.*

*Luc.* I don't know but I may be tempted to do that.

*Frank.* Take it, then—and with it this.

[*Kisses her, and gives her money.*

*Strict.* Um! There are two bribes in a breath! What a jade she is! [*Aside.*

*Luc.* Ay; this gentleman understands reason.

*Frank.* And, be assured, you oblige your mistress while you are serving me.

*Strict.* Her mistress! Damned sex! And damned wife! thou art an epitome of that sex! [*Aside.*

*Frank.* And, if you can procure me an answer, your fee shall be enlarged.

[*Exit* FRANKLY.

*Luc.* The next step is to get her to read this letter.

*Strict.* [*Snatches the letter.*]—No noise—But stand silent there, whilst I read this.—[*Breaks it open, and drops the case.*]—'Madam, the gaiety 'of a heart happy as mine was yesterday, may, I 'hope, easily excuse the unseasonable visit I 'made your house last night.'—Death and the devil! Confusion! I shall run distracted. It is too much! There was a man, then, to whom the hat belonged; and I was gulled, abused, cheated, imposed on by a chit, a child—Oh, woman, woman! But I will be calm, search it to the bottom, and have a full revenge——

*Luc.* [*Aside.*]—So, here's fine work! He'll make himself very ridiculous, though.

*Strict.* [*Reads on.*]—'I know my innocence 'will appear so manifestly, that I need only ap-'peal to the lady who accompanied me to Bath.' Your very humble servant, good, innocent, fine Madam Clarinda. 'And I do not doubt but 'her good-nature,' bawd! bawd! 'will not let 'you persist in injuring your obedient humble 'servant,

'CHARLES FRANKLY.'

Now, who can say my jealousy lacked foundation, or my suspicion of fine madam's innocent gaiety was unjust? Gaiety! Why, ay; 'twas gaiety brought him hither. Gaiety makes her a bawd——My wife may be a whore in gaiety.—What a number of things become fashionable under the notion of gaiety! What, you received this epistle in gaiety, too? and were to deliver it to my wife, I suppose, when the gay fit came

next upon her? Why, you impudent young strumpet, do you laugh at me?

*Luc.* I would, if I dared, laugh most heartily. Be pleased, sir, only to look at that piece of paper that lies there.

*Strict.* Ha!

*Luc.* I have not touched it, sir. It is the case that letter came in; and the direction will inform you whom I was to deliver it to.

*Strict.* This is directed to Clarinda!

*Luc.* Oh, is it so? Now, read it over again, and all your foolish doubts will vanish.

*Strict.* I have no doubts at all. I am satisfied that you, Jacintha, Clarinda, my wife, all are——

*Luc.* Lud! Lud! You will make a body mad.

*Strict.* Hold your impertinent tongue.

*Luc.* You'll find the thing to be just as I say, sir.

*Strict.* Begone!—[*Exit* LUCETTA.]—They must be poor at the work, indeed, if they did not lend one another their names. 'Tis plain, 'tis evident, and I am miserable. But, for my wife, she shall not stay one night longer in my house. Separation, shame, contempt, shall be her portion. I am determined in the thing; and, when once it is over, I may, perhaps, be easy.

[*Exit.*

## SCENE III.—*The Street.*

CLARINDA *brought in a chair*, RANGER *following.*

*Ran.* Hark'e, chairmen! Damn your confounded trot! Go slower.

*Cla.* Here stop.

*Ran.* By Heavens! The monsters hear reason, and obey.

*Cla.* [*Letting down the window.*]—What troublesome fellow was that?

1 *Chair.* Some rake, I warrant, that cannot carry himself home, and wants us to do it for him.

*Cla.* There—And pray do you take care I be not troubled with him. [*Goes in.*

*Ran.* That's as much as to say now, pray follow me. Madam, you are a charming woman, and I will do it——

1 *Chair.* Stand off, sir!

*Ran.* Prithee, honest fellow—what—what writing is that? [*Endeavouring to get in.*

2 *Chair.* You come not here.

*Ran.* Lodgings to be let: a pretty convenient inscription, and the sign of a good modest family. There may be lodgings for gentlemen as well as ladies. Hark'e, rogues; I'll lay you all the silver I have in my pocket, there it is, I get in there in spite of your teeth, ye pimps.

[*Throws down the money, and goes in.*

[*Within*] Chair, chair, chair!

*Chair.* Who calls chair?

1 *Chair.* What, have you let the gentleman in?

2 *Chair.* I'll tell you what, partner, he certainly slipt by whilst we were picking up the money. Come, take up. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE IV.—CLARINDA'S *lodgings.*

*Enter* CLARINDA, *and maid following.*

*Maid.* Bless me, madam, you seem disordered! what's the matter?

*Cla.* Some impertinent fellow followed the chair, and I am afraid they let him in.—[*A noise between* RANGER *and Landlady.*]—I should certainly know that voice.—[RANGER *talks with the Landlady.*]—My madcap cousin Ranger, as I live! I am sure he does not know me. If I could but hide my face now, what sport I should have! A mask, a mask! Run and see if you can find a mask.

*Maid.* I believe there is one above.

*Cla.* Run, run, and fetch it.—[*Exit Maid.*]—Here he comes.

*Enter* RANGER *and Landlady.*

How unlucky is this? [*Turning from them.*

*Land.* What's your business here, unmannerly sir?

*Ran.* Well, let's see these lodgings that are to be let. Gad, a very pretty neat tenement—But hark'e, is it real and natural, all that, or only patched up, and new-painted this summer season, against the town fills?

*Land.* What does the saucy fellow mean with his double tenders here? Get you down——

*Enter Maid with a mask.*

*Maid.* Here is a very dirty one.

[*Aside to* CLARINDA.

*Cla.* No matter——now we shall see a little what he would be at. [*Aside.*

*Land.* This is an honest house. For all your laced waistcoat, I'll have you thrown down, neck and heels.

*Ran.* Pho! not in such a hurry, good old lady ——A mask! Nay, with all my heart. It saves me a world of blushing. Have you ne'er a one for me? I am apt to be ashamed myself, on these occasions.

*Land.* Get you down, I say——

*Ran.* Not if I guess right, old lady. Madam, —[*To* CLARINDA, *who makes signs to the Land lady to retire.*]—look ye there, now! that a woman should live to your age, and know so little of the matter. Begone!—[*Exit Landlady.*]—By her forwardness, this should be a whore of quality. My boy, Ranger, thou art in luck to-day. She wont speak, I find—then, I will.—[*Aside.*]—Delicate lodgings, truly, madam! and very neatly furnished—a very convenient room this, I must needs own, to entertain a mixed company. But, my dear charming creature, does not that

door open to a more commodious apartment, for the happiness of a private friend, or so? The prettiest brass lock---fast, um; that won't do.---'Sdeath, you are a beautiful woman; I am sure you are. Prithee, let me see your face. It is your interest, child---the longer you delay, the more I shall expect. Therefore,---[*Taking her hand.*] my dear, soft, kind, new acquaintance, thus let me take your hand; and, whilst you gently, with the other, let day-light in upon me, let me softly hold you to me, that, with my longing lips, I may receive the warmest, best impression.---[*She unmasks.*]---Clarinda!

*Cla.* Ha, ha! your servant, cousin Ranger—Ha, ha, ha!

*Ran.* Oh, your humble servant, madam. You had like to have been beholden to your mask, cousin—I must brazen it out. [*Aside.*

*Cla.* Ha, ha, ha! You were not so happy in your disguise, sir. The pretty stagger in your gait, that happy disposition of your wig, the genteel negligence of your whole person, and those pretty flowers of modish gallantry, made it impossible to mistake you, my sweet coz.——Ha, ha, ha!

*Ran.* Oh, I knew you, too; but I fancied you had taken a particular liking to my person, and had a mind to sink the relation under that little piece of black velvet! and, egad, you never find me behind hand in a frolic. But, since it is otherwise, my merry, good-humoured cousin, I am as heartily glad to see you in town, as I should be to meet any of my old bottle acquaintance.

*Cla.* And, on my side, I am as happy in meeting your worship, as I should be in a rencounter with e'er a petticoat in Christendom.

*Ran.* And if you have any occasion for a dangling gallant to Vauxhall, Ranelagh, or even the poor neglected Park, you are so unlike the rest of your virtuous sisters of the petticoat, that I will venture myself with you.

*Cla.* Take care what you promise; for who knows but this face, you were pleased to say so many pretty things before you saw it, may raise so many rivals among your kept mistresses, and reps of quality———

*Ran.* Hold, hold! a truce with your satire, sweet coz; or, if scandal must be the topic of every virtuous woman's conversation, call for your tea-waiter, and let it be in it's proper element. Come, your tea, your tea!

*Enter Maid.*

*Cla.* With all my heart———Who's there? Get tea—upon condition that you stay till it comes.

*Ran.* That is according as you behave, madam.

*Cla.* Oh, sir, I am very sensible of the favour.

*Ran.* Nay, you may, I assure you; for there is but one woman of virtue, besides yourself, I would stay with ten minutes (and I have not known her above these twelve hours;) the insipidity, or the rancour of their discourse is insufferable—'Sdeath! I had rather take the air with my grandmother.

*Cla.* Ha, ha, ha! the ladies are highly obliged to you, I vow.

*Ran.* I tell you what; the lady I speak of was obliged to me, and the generous girl is ready to own it.

*Cla.* And, pray, when was it you did virtue this considerable service?

*Ran.* But this last night, the devil fetch me! A romantic whim of mine conveyed me into her chamber, where I found her, young and beautiful, alone, at midnight, dressed like a soft Adonis; her lovely hair all loose about her shoulders———

*Cla.* In boy's clothes! this is worth attending to. [*Aside.*

*Ran.* Gad, I no more suspected her being a woman, than I did your being my cater-cousin.

*Cla.* How did you discover it at last?

*Ran.* Why, faith, she very modestly dropt me a hint of it herself.

*Cla.* Herself! If this should be Jacintha! [*Aside.*

*Ran.* Ay, 'foregad, did she; which I imagined a good sign at midnight—eh, cousin? So I e'en invented a long story of a passion I had for her, though I had never seen her before—you know my old way; and said so many tender things—

*Cla.* As you said to me just now.

*Ran.* Pho! quite in another style, I assure you. It was midnight, and I was in a right cue.

*Cla.* Well! And what did she answer to all these protestations?

*Ran.* Why, instead of running into my arms at once, as I expected———

*Cla.* To be sure.

*Ran.* 'Gad, like a free-hearted, honest girl, she frankly told me she liked another better than she liked me; that I had something in my face that shewed I was a gentleman; and she would e'en trust herself with me, if I would give her my word I would convey her to her spark.

*Cla.* Oh, brave! and how did you bear this?

*Ran.* Why, curse me, if I am ever angry with a woman for not having a passion for me!

*Cla.* No!

*Ran.* Never. I only hate your sex's vain pretence of having no passions at all. Gad, I loved the good-natured girl for it; took her at her word; stole her out of the window; and this morning made a very honest fellow happy in the possession of her.

*Cla.* And her name is Jacintha?

*Ran.* Ha!

*Cla.* Your amours are no secrets, sir. You see you might as well have told me all the whole of last night's adventure; for you find I know——

*Ran.* All! Why, what do you know?

*Cla.* Nay, nothing; I only know that a gentleman's hat cannot be dropt in a lady's chamber———

*Ran.* The devil!

*Cla.* But a husband is such an odd, impertinent, awkward creature, that he will be stumbling over it.

*Ran.* Here has been fine work. [*Aside.*] But how, in the name of wonder, should you know all this?

*Cla.* By being in the same house.

*Ran.* In the same house!

*Cla.* Ay, in the same house, a witness of the confusion you have made.

*Ran.* Frankly's Clarinda, by all that's fortunate! It must be so! [*Aside.*

*Cla.* And let me tell you, sir, that even the dull, low-spirited diversions you ridicule in us tame creatures, are preferable to the romantic exploits that only wine can raise you to.

*Ran.* Yes, cousin: but I'll be even with you. [*Aside.*

*Cla.* If you reflect, cousin, you will find a great deal of wit in shocking a lady's modesty, disturbing her quiet, tainting her reputation, and ruining the peace of a whole family.

*Ran.* To be sure.

*Cla.* These are the high-mettled pleasures of you men of spirit, that the insipidity of the virtuous can never arrive at. And can you, in reality, think your Burgundy, and your Bacchus, your Venus, and your Loves, an excuse for all this? Fie, cousin, fie!

*Ran.* No, cousin.

*Cla.* What, dumb! I am glad you have modesty enough left not to go about to excuse yourself.

*Ran.* It is as you say; when we are sober, and reflect but ever so little on the follies we commit, we are ashamed and sorry: and yet the very next minute we run again into the same absurdities.

*Cla.* What! moralizing, cousin! ha, ha, ha!

*Ran.* What you know is not half, not a hundredth part of the mischief of my last night's frolic; and yet the very next petticoat I saw this morning, I must follow it, and be damned to me; though, for aught I know, poor Frankly's life may depend upon it.

*Cla.* Whose life, sir?

*Ran.* And here do I stand prating to you now.

*Cla.* Pray, good cousin, explain yourself.

*Ran.* Good cousin! She has it. [*Aside.*]—Why, whilst I was making off with the wench, Bellamy and he were quarrelling about her; and though Jacintha and I made all the haste we could, we did not get to them before——

*Cla.* Before what? I'm frightened out of my wits!

*Ran.* Not that Frankly cared three half-pence for the girl.

*Cla.* But there was no mischief done, I hope?

*Ran.* Pho! a slight scratch; nothing at all, as the surgeon said: though he was but a queer looking son of a bitch of a surgeon, neither.

*Cla.* Good God! why, he should have the best that can be found in London.

*Ran.* Ay, indeed, so he should: that was what I was going for, when I saw you. [*Sits down.*] They are all at Jack Meggot's hard by, and you will keep me here?

*Cla.* I keep you here! For Heaven's sake, be gone.

*Ran.* Your tea is a damned while a coming.

*Cla.* You shall have no tea now, I assure you.

*Ran.* Nay! one dish.

*Cla.* No, positively, you shall not stay.

*Ran.* Your commands are absolute, madam. [*Going.*

*Cla.* Then Frankly is true, and I only am to blame.

*Ran.* [*Returns.*] But I beg ten thousand pardons, cousin, that I should forget———

*Cla.* Forget what!

*Ran.* Forget to salute you.

*Cla.* Pshaw! how can you trifle at such a time as this?

*Ran.* A trifle! wrong not your beauty.

*Cla.* Lord, how teasing you are. There.

*Ran.* [*Kisses her.*] Poor thing! how uneasy she is. Nay, no ceremony, you shall not stir a step with me.

*Cla.* I do not intend it. This is downright provoking. [*Exit* RANGER.] Who's there?

*Enter Landlady.*

*Land.* Madam, did your ladyship call?

*Cla.* Does one Mr Meggot live in this neighbourhood?

*Land.* Yes, madam, a fine gentleman, and keeps a noble house, and a world of company.

*Cla.* Very well; I don't want his history. I wonder my servants are not come yet.

*Land.* Lack a-day, madam, they are all below.

*Cla.* Send up one, then, with a card to me. I must know the truth of this immediately.

[*Exeunt*

## ACT V.

SCENE I.—*A room in* MR STRICTLAND'S *house.*

MR *and* MRS STRICTLAND *discovered; she weeping, and he writing.*

*Mrs Strict.* HEIGH ho!

*Strict.* What can possibly be the occasion of that sigh, madam? you have yourself agreed to a maintenance, and a maintenance no dutchess need be ashamed of.

*Mrs Strict.* But the extremities of provocation, that drove me to that agreement——

*Strict.* Were the effect of your own follies. Why do you disturb me? [*Writes on.*

*Mrs Strict.* I would not willingly give you a moment's uneasiness; I but desire a fair and equal hearing; and if I satisfy you not in every point, then abandon me, discard me to the world, and its malicious tongues.

*Strict.* What was it you said? Damn this pen!

*Mrs Strict.* I say, Mr Strictland, I would only——

*Strict.* You would only——You would only repeat what you have been saying this hour; I am innocent; and when I shewed you the letter I had taken from your maid, what was then your poor evasion, but that it was to Clarinda, and you were innocent?

*Mrs Strict.* Heaven knows, I am innocent!

*Strict.* But I know your Clarinda, your woman of honour, is your blind, your cover, your—— But why do I distract myself about a woman I have no longer any concern with? Here, madam, is your fate. A letter to your brother in the country.

*Mrs Strict.* Sir——

*Strict.* I have told him what a sister he has to receive, and how to bid her welcome.

*Mrs Strict.* Then my ruin is complete. My brother!

*Strict.* I must vindicate my own honour, else what will the world say?

*Mrs Strict.* That brother was my only hope, my only ground of patience. In his retirement, I hoped my name might have been safe, and slept, till, by some happy means, you might at length have known me innocent, and pitied me.

*Strict.* Retirement! pretty soul! no, no; that face was never made for retirement; it is another sort of retiring you are fittest for. Ha! hark! What's that? [*A knocking at the door.*] Two gentle taps—and why but two! was that the signal, madam? Stir not, on your life!

*Mrs. Strict.* Give me resolution, Heaven, to bear this usage, and keep it secret from the world! [*Aside.*

*Strict.* I will have no signs, no items, no hem to tell him I am here. Ha! another tap. The gentleman is in haste, I find. [*Opens the door, and enter* TESTER.] Tester! Why did you not come in, rascal? [*Beats him.*] All vexations meet to cross me.

*Test.* Lard, sir! what do you strike me for? my mistress ordered me never to come in where she was, without first knocking at the door.

*Strict.* Oh, cunning devil! Tester is too honest to be trusted.

*Mrs Strict.* Unhappy man! will nothing undeceive him? [*Aside.*

*Test.* Sir, here is a letter.

*Strict.* To my wife?

*Test.* No, sir, to you. The servant waits below.

*Strict.* Art sure it is a servant?

*Test.* Sir! [*Staring.*] it is Mr Buckle, sir.

*Strict.* I am mad: I know not what to say, or do, or think. But let's read: [*Reads to himself.*]

'Sir, we cannot bear to reflect that Mrs Strict-
'land may possibly be ruined in your esteem, and
'in the voice of the world, only by the confusion
'which our affairs have made in your family,
'without offering all within our power to clear
'the misunderstanding between you. If you will
'give yourself the trouble but to step to Mr Meg-
'got's, where all parties will be, we doubt not
'but we can entirely satisfy your most flagrant
'suspicions, to the honour of Mrs Strictland, and
'the quiet of your lives.

'JACINTHA. JOHN BELLAMY.'

Hey! Here is the whole gang witnessing for one another. They think I am an ass, and will be led by the nose to believe every thing. Call me a chair. [*Exit* TESTER.] Yes, I will go to this rendezvous of enemies—I will—and find out all her plots, her artifices and contrivances: it will clear my conduct to her brother, and all her friends. [*Exit* MR STRICTLAND.

*Mrs Strict.* Gone so abruptly! What can that letter be about? no matter; there is no way left to make us easy, but by my disgrace, and I must learn to suffer; time and innocence will teach me to bear it patiently.

*Enter* LUCETTA.

*Luc.* Mrs Bellamy, madam, (for my young lady is married) begs you would follow Mr Strictland to Mr Meggot's; she makes no doubt but she shall be able to make you and my master easy.

*Mrs Strict.* But how came she to know any thing of the matter?

*Luc.* I have been with them, madam; I could not bear to see so good a lady ill-treated.

*Mrs Strict.* I am indeed, Lucetta, ill-treated: but I hope this day will be the last of it.

*Luc.* Madam Clarinda and Mr Frankly will be there: and the young gentleman, madam, who was with you in this room last night.

*Mrs Strict.* Ha! if he is there, there may be hopes; and it is worth the trying.

*Luc.* Dear lady, let me call a chair.

*Mrs Strict.* I go with you. I cannot be more wretched than I am. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*A room in* JACK MEGGOT'S *house.*

*Enter* FRANKLY, RANGER, BELLAMY, JACINTHA, *and* JACK MEGGOT.

*Frank.* Oh, Ranger, this is news indeed! your cousin, and a lady of such fortune!

*Ran.* I have done the business for you: I tell you she's your own. She loves you.

*Frank.* You make my heart dance with joy! Words are too faint to tell the joy I feel!

*Ran.* I have put that heart of hers into such a flutter, that I'll lay a hundred guineas, with the assistance which this lady has promised me, I fix her yours directly.

*Jac.* Ay, ay, Mr Frankly, we have a design upon her which cannot fail. But you must obey orders.

*Frank.* Most willingly: but remember, dear lady, I have more than life at stake.

*Jac.* Away, then, into the next room; for she is this instant coming hither.

*Frank.* Hither! you surprise me more and more.

*Jac.* Here is a message from her, by which she desires leave to wait on me this afternoon.

*Ran.* Only for the chance of seeing you here, I assure ye.

*Frank.* Let me hug thee; though I know not how to believe it.

*Ran.* Psha! prithee don't stifle me! It is a busy day, a very busy day.

*J. Meg.* Thou art the most unaccountable creature in life.

*Ran.* But the most lucky one, Jack, if I succeed for Frankly as I have for Bellamy; and my heart whispers me I shall. Come in, most noble Mr Buckle! and what have you to propose?

*Enter* BUCKLE.

*Buc.* A lady, madam, in a chair, says her name is Clarinda.

*Jac.* Desire her to walk up.

*Bel.* How could you let her wait? [*Exit* BUCKLE.] You must excuse him, madam; Buckle is a true bachelor's servant, and knows no manners.

*Jac.* Away, away, Mr Frankly, and stay till I call you. A rap with my fan shall be the signal. [*Exit* FRANKLY.] We make very free with your house, Mr Meggot.

*J. Meg.* Oh! you could not oblige me more.

*Enter* CLARINDA.

*Cla.* Dear Mrs Bellamy, pity my confusion. I am to wish you joy, and ask you pardon, all in a breath. I know not what to say; I am quite ashamed of my last night's behaviour.

*Jac.* Come, come, Clarinda, it is all well; all is over, and forgot. Mr Bellamy——— [*Salute.*

*Cla.* I wish you joy, sir, with all my heart, and should have been very sorry if any folly of mine had prevented it.

*Bel.* Madam, I am obliged to you.

*Cla.* I see nothing of Mr Frankly! my mind misgives me. [*Aside.*

*Ran.* And so, you came hither purely out of friendship, good-nature, and humility?

*Cla.* Purely.

*Ran.* To confess your offences, to beg pardon, and to make reparation?

*Cla.* Purely. Is this any thing so extraordinary?

*J. Meg.* The most so of any thing in life, I think.

*Ran.* A very whimsical business for so fine a lady! and an errand you seldom went on before, I fancy, my dear cousin?

*Jac.* Never, I dare swear, if I may judge by the awkward concern she shews in delivering it.

*Cla.* Concern! Lard! well, I protest, you are all exceeding pretty company! Being settled for life, Jacintha, gives an ease to the mind that brightens conversation strangely.

*Jac.* I am sorry, with all my heart, you are not in the same condition; for, as you are, my dear, you are horridly *chagriné.*

*Ran.* But with a little of our help, madam, the lady may recover, and be very good company.

*Cla.* Hum! What does he mean, Mr Bellamy?

*Bel.* Ask him, madam.

*Cla.* Indeed, I shall not give myself the trouble.

*Jac.* Then, you know what he means?

*Cla.* Something impertinent, I suppose, not worth explaining.

*Jac.* It is something you won't let him explain, I find.

*Enter* BUCKLE, *and whispers* MEGGOT.

*J. Meg.* Very well. Desire him to walk into the parlour. Madam, the gentleman is below.

*Jac.* Then every one to your posts. You know your cues?

*Ran.* I warrant ye. [*Exeunt Gentlemen.*

*Cla.* All gone! I am glad of it, for I want to speak to you.

*Jac.* And I, my dear Clarinda, have something which I do not know how to tell you: but it must be known sooner or latter.

*Cla.* What's the matter?

*Jac.* Poor Mr Frankly———

*Cla.* You fright me out of my senses!

*Jac.* Has no wounds but what you can cure. Ha, ha, ha!

*Cla.* Psha! I am angry.

*Jac.* Psha! You are pleased; and will be more so, when I tell you, this man, whom fortune has thrown in your way, is, in rank and temper, the man in the world who suits you best for a husband.

*Cla.* Husband! I say, husband, indeed! Where will this end? [*Aside.*

*Jac.* His very soul is yours; and he only waits an opportunity of telling you so. He is in the next room. Shall I call him in?

*Cla.* My dear girl, hold!

*Jac.* How foolish is this coyness now, Clarinda! If the men were here, indeed, something might be said——And so, Mr Frankly——

*Cla.* How can you be so teasing?

*Jac.* Nay, I am in downright earnest: and, to shew how particular I have been in my inquiries, though I know you have a spirit above regarding the modish, paltry way of a Smithfield bargain ——his fortune——

*Cla.* I don't care what his fortune is.

*Jac.* Don't you so? Then you are farther gone than I thought you were.

*Cla.* No, psha! prithee, I don't mean so, neither.

*Jac.* I don't care what you mean: but you won't like him the worse, I hope, for having a fortune superior to your own? Now, shall I call him in?

*Cla.* Pho, dear girl—Some other time.

*Jac.* [*Raps with her fan.*] That's the signal, and here he is. You shall not stir: I positively will leave you together. [*Exit* JACINTHA.

*Cla.* I tremble all over!

*Enter* FRANKLY.

*Frank.* Pardon this freedom, madam: but I hope our having so luckily met with a common friend in Mrs Bellamy——

*Cla.* Sir!

*Frank.* Makes any farther apology for my behaviour last night absolutely unnecessary.

*Cla.* So far, Mr Frankly, that I think the apology should be rather on my side, for the impertinent bustle I made about her.

*Frank.* This behaviour gives me hopes, madam: pardon the construction—but, from the bustle you made about the lady, may I not hope you was not quite indifferent about the gentleman?

*Cla.* Have a care of being too sanguine in your hopes: might not a love of power, or the satisfaction of shewing that power, or the dear pleasure of abusing that power; might not these have been foundation enough for more than what I did?

*Frank.* Charming woman! with most of your sex, I grant, they might; but not with you. Whatever power your beauty gives, your good-nature will allow you no other use of it than to oblige.

*Cla.* This is the height of compliment, Mr Frankly.

*Frank.* Not in my opinion, I assure you, madam; and I am now going to put it to the trial.

*Cla.* What is he going to say, now? [*Aside.*

*Frank.* What is it that ails me, that I cannot speak? Psha! he here! [*Aside.*

*Enter* RANGER.

Interrupted! impertinent!

*Ran.* There is no sight so ridiculous as a pair of your true lovers. Here are you two now, bowing and cringing, and keeping a passion secret from one another, that is no secret to all the house beside. And, if you don't make up the matter immediately, it will be all over the town within these two hours.

*Cla.* What do you mean?

*Frank.* Ranger——

*Ran.* Do you be quiet, can't ye? [*Aside.*] But it is over, I suppose, cousin, and you have given him your consent.

*Cla.* Sir, the liberties you are pleased to take with me——

*Ran.* Oh! in your airs still, are you? Why, then, Mr Frankly, there is a certain letter of yours, sir, to this lady——

*Cla.* A letter to me!

*Ran.* Ay! to you, madam.

*Frank.* Ha! what of that letter?

*Ran.* It is only fallen into Mr Strictland's hands, that is all; and he has read it.

*Frank.* Read it!

*Ran.* Ay, read it to all his family at home, and to all the company below: and if some stop be not put to it, it will be read in all the coffee-houses in town.

*Frank.* A stop! this sword shall put a stop to it, or I will perish in the attempt.

*Ran.* But will that sword put a stop to the talk of the town?——Only make it talk the faster, take my word for it.

*Cla.* This is all a trick.

*Ran.* A trick! Is it so? you shall soon see that, my fine cousin. [*Exit* RANGER.

*Frank.* It is but too true, I fear. There is such a letter, which I gave Lucetta. Can you forgive me? Was I much to blame, when I could neither see nor hear of you?

*Cla.* [*Tenderly.*] You give yourself, Mr Frankly, a thousand times more uneasiness than you need about me.

*Frank.* If this uneasiness but convinces you how much I love you——Interrupted again!

*Cla.* This is downright malice. [*Aside.*

*Enter* RANGER, *followed by* JACINTHA, MR STRICTLAND, BELLAMY, *and* MEGGOT.

*Ran.* Enter, enter, gentlemen and lady. Now you shall see whether this is a trick or no.

*Cla.* Mr Strictland here! What is all this?

*Jac.* Do not be uneasy, my dear; we will explain it to you.

*Frank.* I cannot bear this trifling, Ranger, when my heart is on the rack.

*Ran.* Come this way, then, and learn.

[JACINTHA, CLARINDA, FRANKLY, *and* RANGER, *retire.*]

[MR STRICTLAND, BELLAMY, *and* MEGGOT, *advance.*]

*Strict.* Why, I know not well what to say. This has a face. This letter may as well agree with Clarinda, as with my wife, as you have told the story; and Lucetta explained it so: but she, for a sixpenny piece, would have construed it the other way.

*J. Meg.* But, sir, if we produce this Mr Frankly to you, and he owns himself the author of this letter——

*Bel.* And if Clarinda likewise be brought before your face to encourage his addresses, there can be no farther room for doubt?

*Strict.* No. Let that appear, and I shall, I think I shall, be satisfied—But yet it cannot be——

*Bel.* Why not? Hear me, sir. [*They talk.*

[JACINTHA, CLARINDA, FRANKLY, *and* RANGER, *advance.*

*Jac.* In short, Clarinda, unless the affair is made up directly, a separation, with all the obloquy on her side, must be the consequence.

*Cla.* Poor Mrs Strictland! I pity her: but, for him, he deserves all he feels, were it ten times what it is.

*Jac.* It is for her sake only, that we beg of you both to bear his impertinence.

*Cla.* With all my heart. You will do what you please with me.

*Frank.* Generous creature!

*Strict.* Ha! here she is, and, with her, the very man I saw deliver the letter to Lucetta. I do begin to fear I have made myself a fool. Now for the proof. Here is a letter, sir, which has given me great disturbance, and these gentlemen assure me, it was writ by you.

*Frank.* That letter, sir, upon my honour, I left this morning with Lucetta, for this lady.

*Strict.* For that lady! and Frankly, the name at the bottom, is not feigned, but your real name?

*Frank.* Frankly is my name.

*Strict.* I see, I feel myself ridiculous.

*Jac.* Now, Mr Strictland, I hope—

*J. Meg.* Ay, ay; a clear case.

*Strict.* I am satisfied, and will go this instant to Mrs Strictland.

*Ran.* Why, then, the devil fetch me if this would satisfy me!

*Strict.* What's that?

*Ran.* Nay, nothing; it is no affair of mine.

*Bel.* What do you mean, Ranger?

*Strict.* Ay, what do you mean? I will know before I stir.

*Ran.* With all my heart, sir. Cannot you see that all this may be concerted matter between them?

*Frank.* Ranger, you know I can resent.

*Strict.* Go on; I will defend you, let who will resent it.

*Ran.* Why, then, sir, I declare myself your friend: and, were I as you, nothing but their immediate marriage should convince me.

*Strict.* Sir, you're right, and are my friend indeed. Give me your hand.

*Ran.* Nay, were I to hear her say, I, Clarinda, take thee, Charles, I would not believe them, till I saw them a-bed together. Now, resent it as you will.

*Strict.* Ay, sir, as you will: but nothing less shall convince me: and so, my fine lady, if you are in earnest——

*Cla.* Sure, Mr Strictland——

*Strict.* Nay, no flouncing; you cannot escape.

*Ran.* Why, Frankly, hast no soul?

*Frank.* I pity her confusion.

*Ran.* Pity her confusion! the man's a fool—Here, take her hand.

*Frank.* Thus, on my knees, then let me ravish, with your hand, your heart.

*Cla.* Ravish it you cannot; for it is with all my heart I give it you.

*Strict.* I am satisfied.

*Cla.* And so am I, now it is once over.

*Ran.* And so am I, my dainty cousin; and I wish you joy of a man your whole sex would go to cuffs for, if they knew him but half so well as I do—Ha! she's here; this is more than I bargained for. [*Aside.*

JACINTHA *leads in* MRS STRICTLAND.

*Strict.* [*Embracing* MRS STRICTLAND.]—Madam, reproach me not with my folly, and you shall never hear of it again.

*Mrs Strict.* Reproach you! No! If ever you hear the least reflection pass my lips, forsake me in that instant: or, what would yet be worse, suspect again.

*Strict.* It is enough. I am ashamed to talk to thee. This letter, which I wrote to your brother, thus I tear in pieces, and, with it, part for ever with my jealousy.

*Mrs Strict.* This is a joy, indeed! As great as unexpected. Yet there is one thing wanting, to make it lasting.

*Ran.* What the devil is coming now? [*Aside.*

*Mrs Strict.* Be assured, every other suspicion of me was as unjust as your last: though, perhaps, you had more foundation for your fears.

*Ran.* She wont tell, sure, for her own sake. [*Aside.*

*Mrs Strict.* All must be cleared, before my heart will be at ease.

*Ran.* It looks plaguy like it, though! [*Aside.*

*Strict.* What mean you? I am all attention.

*Mrs Strict.* There was a man, as you suspected, in my chamber last night.

*Strict.* Ha! take care; I shall relapse.

*Mrs Strict.* That gentleman was he——

*Ran.* Here is a devil for you! [*Aside*

*Mrs Strict.* Let him explain the rest.

*Ran.* A frolic, a mere frolic, on my life!

*Strict.* A frolic! Zounds! [*They interpose.*

*Ran.* Nay, don't let us quarrel the very moment you declared yourself my friend. There was no harm done, I promise you. Nay, never frown. After I have told my story, any satisfaction you are pleased to ask, I shall be ready to give.

*Strict.* Be quick, then, and ease me of my pain.

*Ran.* Why, then, as I was strolling about last night upon the look-out, I must confess, chance, and chance only, conveyed me to your house; where I espied a ladder of ropes most invitingly fastened to the window——

*Jac.* Which ladder I had fastened for my escape.

*Strict.* Proceed.

*Ran.* Up mounted I, and up I should have gone, if it had been into the garret; it's all one to Ranger. I opened one door, then another, and, to my great surprise, the whole house was silent; at last, I stole into a room where this lady was undressing——

*Strict.* 'Sdeath and the devil! You did not dare, sure———

*Ran.* I don't know whether I had dared, or no, if I had not heard the maid say something of her master's being jealous. Oh, damn me, thought I, then the work is half done to my hands!

*Jac.* Do you mind that, Mr Strictland?

*Strict.* I do—I do, most feelingly.

*Ran.* The maid grew saucy, and, most conveniently to my wishes, was turned out of the room; and, if you had not the best wife in the world——

*Strict.* 'Ounds, sir! But what right have you———

*Ran.* What right, sir? If you will be jealous of your wife without a cause; if you will be out at that time of night, when you might have been so much better employed at home; we, young fellows, think we have a right——

*Strict.* No joking, I beseech you; you know not what I feel.

*Ran.* Then, seriously, I was mad, or drunk enough, call it what you will, to be very rude to this lady, for which I ask both her pardon and yours. I am an odd sort of a fellow, perhaps; but I am above telling you, or any man, a lie, damn me, if I am not!

*Strict.* I must, I cannot but believe you; and for the future, madam, you shall find a heart ready to love, and trust you. No tears, I beg; I cannot bear them.

*Mrs Strict.* I cannot speak; and yet there is a favour, sir——

*Strict.* I understand you; and, as proof of the sincerity with which I speak, I beg it as a favour, of this lady in particular,—[*To* CLARINDA] —and of all the company in general, to return to my house immediately, where every thing, Mr Bellamy, shall be settled to your entire satisfaction. No thanks; I have not deserved them.

*J. Meg.* I beg your pardon, sir; the fiddles are ready; Mrs Bellamy has promised me her hand, and I won't part with one of you till midnight; and, if you are as well satisfied as you pretend to be, let our friend Rattle, here, begin the ball with Mrs Strictland; for he seems to be the hero of the day.

*Strict.* As you and the company please.

*Ran.* Why, this is honest; continue but in this humour, and faith, sir, you may trust me to run about your house like a spaniel. I cannot sufficiently admire at the whimsicalness of my good fortune, in being so instrumental to this general happiness. Bellamy, Frankly, I wish you joy, with all my heart—though I had rather you should be married than I, for all that. Never did matrimony appear to me with a smile upon her face, till this instant.

Sure joys for ever wait each happy pair,
When sense the man, and virtue crowns the fair,
And kind compliance proves their mutual care.

[*A dance. Exeunt omnes.*

# THE

# WAY TO KEEP HIM.

BY

*MURPHY.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### MEN.

LOVEMORE, *a dissipated man of fashion.*
SIR BASHFUL CONSTANT, *a sheepish humourist.*
SIR BRILLIANT FASHION, *a coxcomb.*
WILLIAM, *servant to* LOVEMORE.
SIDEBOARD, *servant to* SIR BASHFUL.
POMPEY, *a black servant.*
JOHN.

### WOMEN.

MRS LOVEMORE, *neglected by her husband.*
THE WIDOW BELLMOUR, *a woman of fashion.*
LADY CONSTANT, *wife to sir Bashful.*
MUSLIN, *maid to* MRS LOVEMORE.
MIGNIONET, *maid to* MRS BELLMOUR.
FURNISH, *maid to* LADY CONSTANT.

*Scene—London.*

## ACT I.

SCENE I.—*An apartment in* LOVEMORE'S *house.*

WILLIAM *and* SIDEBOARD *discovered at a game of cards.*

*Wil.* A PLAGUE go with it! I have turned out my game: Is forty-seven good?

*Side.* Equal.

*Wil.* Confound the cards! tierce to a queen?

*Side.* Equal.

*Wil* There again! ruined, stock and block: nothing can save me. I don't believe there is a footman in England plays with worse luck than myself. Four aces are fourteen.

*Side.* That's hard; cruel, by Jupiter! Aces against me every time.

*Wil.* Four aces are fourteen: fifteen. [*Plays.*

*Side.* There's your equality.

*Wil.* Very well: I turned out my point. Sixteen; [*Plays.*] seventeen. [*Plays.*]

*Enter* MUSLIN.

*Mus.* There's a couple of you, indeed! You are so fond of the vices of your betters, that you are scarce out of your beds, but you must imitate them and their profligate ways. Set you up, forsooth!

*Wil.* Prithee be quiet, woman, do. Eighteen. [*Plays.*

*Mus.* Upon my word!—With your usual ease, Mr Coxcomb.

*Wil.* Manners, Mrs Muslin: you see Mr Sideboard here; he is just come on a message from sir Bashful Constant. Have some respect for a stranger. Nineteen, clubs. [*Plays.*

*Mus.* It would become Mr Sideboard to go back with his answer; and it would become you to send my lady word——

*Wil.* Command your tongue, Mrs Muslin:

you'll put me out. What shall I play?—He will go back with his answer in good time. Let his master wait till it suits our conveniency. Nineteen, clubs: where shall I go now?

*Mus.* Have done with your folly, Mr Impertinent! My lady desires to know——

*Wil.* I tell you, woman, my master and I desire to have nothing to do with you and your lady. Twenty, diamonds. [*Plays.*

*Mus.* But I tell you, Mr Brazen, that my lady desires to know at what hour your master came home last night, and how he does this morning?

*Wil.* Ridiculous! Don't disturb us with that nonsense now; you see I am not at leisure. I and my master are resolved to be teased no more by you; and so, Mrs Go-between, you may return as you came. What the devil shall I play? We will have nothing to do with you, I tell you.

*Mus.* You'll have nothing to do with us? But you shall have to do with us, or I'll know the reason why.

[*She snatches the cards from him, and throws them about.*]

*Wil.* Death and fury! this meddling woman has destroyed my whole game. A man might as well be married, as be treated in this fashion.

*Side.* I shall score you for this, Mr William: I was sure of the cards, and that would have made me up.

*Wil.* No, you'll score nothing for this. You win too much of me. I am a very pretty annuity to you.

*Side.* Annuity, say you? I lose a fortune to you in the course of the year. How could you, Mrs Muslin, behave in this sort to persons of our dignity?

*Mus.* Decamp with your dignity; take your answer to your master: turn upon your rogue's heel, and rid the house.

*Side.* I shan't dispute with you. I hate wrangling: I leave that to lawyers and married people; they have nothing else to do. Mr William, I shall let sir Bashful know, that Mr Lovemore will be at home for him. When you come to our house, I'll give you your revenge. We can have a snug party there, and I promise you a glass of choice Champaigne: it happens to be a good batch; sir Bashful gets none of it: I keep it for my own friends. *Au revoir.* [*Exit.*

*Wil.* [*To* MUSLIN.] You see what mischief you have made.

*Mus.* Truce with your foolery; and now, sir, be so obliging as to send my lady an answer to her questions: How and when your rakehelly master came home last night?

*Wil.* I'll tell you one thing, Mrs Muslin; you and my master will be the death of me at last. In the name of charity, what do you both take me for? Whatever appearances may be, I am but of mortal mould; nothing supernatural about me.

*Mus.* Upon my word, Mr Powder-Puff!——

*Will.* I have not, indeed; and flesh and blood, let me tell you, can't hold it always at this rate. I can't be for ever a slave to Mr Lovemore's eternal frolics, and to your second-hand airs.

*Mus.* Second-hand airs!

*Wil.* Yes, second-hand airs! you take them at your ladies' toilets with their cast gowns, and so you descend to us with them.—And then, on the other hand, there's my master!—Because he chooses to live upon the principal of his health, and so run out his whole stock as fast as he can, he must have my company with him in his devil's dance to the other world! Never at home till three, four, five, six in the morning.

*Mus.* Ay, a vile, ungrateful man! always ranging abroad, and no regard for a wife that dotes upon him. And your love for me is all of a piece. I have no patience with you both; a couple of false, perfidious, abandoned profligates!

*Wil.* Hey! where is your tongue running? My master, as the world goes, is a good sort of a civil kind of a husband; and I, heaven help me! a poor simpleton of a constant, amorous puppy, who bears with all the whims of my little tyrant here. Come and kiss me, you jade; come and kiss me.

*Mus.* Paws off, Cæsar. Don't think to make me your dupe. I know when you go with him to this new lady, this Bath acquaintance; and I know you are as false as my master, and give all my dues to yours Mrs Mignionet there.

*Wil.* Hush! not a word of that. I am ruined, pressed, and sent on board a tender directly, if you blab that I trusted you with that secret.—But to charge me with falsehood!——injustice and ingratitude!——My master, to be sure, does drink an agreeable dish of tea with the widow. He has been there every evening this month past. How long things are to be in this train, Heaven only knows. But he does visit there, and I attend him. I ask my master, sir, says I, what time will you please to want me? He fixes the hour, and I strut by Mrs Mignionet, without so much as tipping her a single glance. She stands watering at the mouth, and a pretty fellow that, says she: Ay gaze on, say I, gaze on: I know what you would be at: you would be glad to have me: but sour grapes, my dear; and so home I come, to cherish my own lovely little wanton: you know I do, and after toying with thee, I fly back to my master, later indeed than he appoints, but always too soon for him. He is loth to part: he lingers and dangles, and I stand cooling my heels. Oh! to the devil I pitch such a life!

*Mus.* Why don't you strive to reclaim the vile man?

*Wil.* Softly; not so fast. I have my talent to be sure; yes, I must acknowledge some talent,

But can you suppose that I have power to turn the drift of his inclinations? Can I give him a new taste, and lead him as I please? And to whom? To his wife? Ridiculous! A wife has no attraction now; the spring of the passions flies back; it won't do.

*Mus.* Fine talking! and you admire yourself for it, don't you? Can you proceed, sir?

*Wil.* I tell you a wife is out of date; the time was—but that's all over; a wife is a drug now; mere tarwater, with every virtue under heaven, but nobody takes it.

*Mus.* Have done, or I'll print these ten nails upon your rogue's face.

*Wil.* Come and kiss me, I say.

*Mus.* A fiddlestick for your kisses, while you encourage your master to open rebellion against the best of wives.

*Wil.* I tell you 'tis all her own fault. Why does not she study to please him as you do me. Come and throw your arms about my neck.

*Mus.* As I used to do, Mr Impudence?

*Wil.* Then I must force you to your own good. [*Kisses her.*] Pregnant with delight! egad, if my master was not in the next room———

[*Bell rings.*

*Mus.* Hush! my lady's bell: how long has he been up?

*Wil.* He has been up—[*Kisses her.*] 'Sdeath! you have set me all on fire. [*Kisses her.*

*Mus.* There, there; have done now; the bell rings again. What must I say? When did he come home?

*Wil.* He came home—[*Kisses her.*] he came home at five this morning; damned himself for a blockhead; [*Kisses.*] went to bed in a surly humour; was tired of himself and every body else, [*Bell rings, he kisses her.*] and he is now tip-toe spirits with sir Brilliant Fashion in that room yonder.

*Mus.* Sir Brilliant Fashion! I wish my lady would mind what he says to her—You great bear! you have given me such a flush in my face! [*Takes a pocket looking-glass.*] I look pretty well, I think. There [*Kisses him.*], have done, and let me be gone. [*Exit.*

*Wil.* There goes high and low life contrasted in one person. She has not dived to the bottom of my master's secrets; that's one good thing.—What she knows, she'll blab. We shall hear of this widow from Bath: but the plot lies deeper than they are aware of. Inquire they will; and let them, say I; their answer will do them no good. 'Mr Lovemore visit the widow Bell-'mour?' We know 'no such person.' That's what they'll get for their pains. Their puzzle will be greater than ever, and they may sit down to chew the cud of disappointed malice. Hush! my master and sir Brilliant; I'll take care of a single rogue, and get me out of their way.

[*Exit.*

*Enter* LOVEMORE *and* SIR BRILLIANT.

*Love.* My dear sir Brilliant, I must both pity and laugh at you. Thou art metamorphosed into the most whimsical being!

*Sir Bril.* If your raillery diverts you, go on with it. This is always the case: apply for sober advice, and your friend plays you off with a joke.

*Love.* Sober advice! very far gone, indeed.—There is no such thing as talking soberly to the tribe of lovers. That eternal absence of mind that possesses you all! There is no society with you. I was damnable company myself, when I was one of the pining herd: but a dose of matrimony has cooled me pretty handsomely; and here comes *repetatur haustus.*

*Enter* MUSLIN.

*Mus.* My lady sends her compliments, and begs to know how you do this morning.

*Love.* [*Aside to* SIR BRILLIANT.] The novelty of the compliment is enlivening—It is the devil to be teased in this manner. What did you say, child?

*Mus.* My lady hopes you find yourself well this morning.

*Love.* Ay, your lady: give her my compliments, and tell her—and tell her I hope she is well, and—— [*Yawns.*

*Mus.* She begs you won't think of going out, without seeing her.

*Love.* To be sure, she has such variety every time one sees her—my head aches woefully—— tell your lady—I shall be glad to see her; I'll wait on her—[*Yawns.*]—tell her what you will.

*Mus.* A brute! I shall let my lady know, sir.

[*Exit* MUS.

*Love.* My dear sir Brilliant, you see me an example before your eyes. Put the widow Bellmour out of your head, and let my lord Etheridge be the victim for you.

*Sir Bril.* Positively no; my pride is picqued. My lord Etheridge shall find me a more formidable rival than he imagines. By the way, how long has the noble peer been in England?

*Love.* His motions are unknown to me. [*Aside.*] I don't like that question. His lordship is in France, is not he?

*Sir Bril.* No; he is certainly returned. The match is to be concluded privately. He visits her *incog.*

*Love.* [*Forcing a laugh.*] Oh! no; that cannot be; my lord Etheridge loves parade. I cannot help laughing. The jealousy of you lovers is for ever conjuring up phantoms to torment yourselves. My dear sir Brilliant, wait for realities; there are enough in life, and you may teach your fancy to be at rest, and give you no further trouble.

*Sir Bril.* Nay, don't let your fancy run away with you. What I tell you, is the real truth.

*Love.* Well, if it be true, and if lord Ethe-

ridge is come to England to marry, do you go to France not to marry, and you will have the best of the bargain.

*Enter* WILLIAM.

*Wil.* Sir Bashful Constant is in his chariot at the upper end of the street, and if your honour is at leisure, he will wait upon you.

*Love.* Have not I sent him word I should be at home? Let him come as soon as he will.——[*Exit* WILLIAM.] Another instance, sir Brilliant, to deter you from all thoughts of matrimony.

*Sir Bril.* Po! hang him! he is no precedent for me. A younger brother, who lived in middling life, comes to a title and an estate on the death of a consumptive baronet; marries a woman of quality, and now carries the primitive ideas of his narrow education into high life.—Don't you remember, when he had chambers in Fig-tree-court, and used to saunter and lounge away his time in Temple coffee-houses? The fellow is as dull as a bill in Chancery.

*Love.* But he is improved since that time.

*Sir Bril.* Impossible; don't you see how he goes on? He knows nothing of the world; if his eyes meet yours, he blushes up to his ears, and looks suspicious, as if he imagined you had a design upon him.

*Love.* I can explain that part of his character. He has a mortal aversion to wit and raillery, and dreads nothing so much as being laughed at for being particular.

*Sir Bril.* And so, fearing to be ridiculous, he becomes substantially so every moment.

*Love.* Even so; and if you look at him, he shrinks back from your observation, casting a sly, slow, jealous eye all around him, like Miss Bumpkin in a country village, awkwardly endeavouring to conceal what the increase of her shape discovers to the whole parish.

*Sir Bril.* And then his behaviour to his lady!

*Love.* Why, as to that point, I don't think he hates her. His fear of ridicule may be at the bottom. He has strange notions about the dignity of a husband. There is a secret, which he would fain tell me, and yet he is shy, and he hints, and he hesitates, and then he retreats back into himself, and ends just where he began. But with all his faults, he has fits of good nature. There; his chariot's at the door.

*Sir Bril.* Lady Constant, you mean, has fits of good nature. Have you made any progress there?

*Love.* That's well from you, who are the formidable man in that quarter.

*Sir Bril.* Oh! no; positively, no pretence, no colour for it.

*Love.* Don't I know that you have made advances?

*Sir Bril.* Advances! I pity my lady Constant, and———



*Love.* Well, that's generous—hush! I hear him coming. Sir Brilliant, I admire your amorous charity of all things!

*Enter* SIR BASHFUL CONSTANT.

*Sir Bash.* Mr Lovemore, I have taken the liberty—but you seem to be busy, and I intrude, perhaps.

*Love.* Oh, by no means: walk in, Sir Bashful.

*Sir Bash.* Sir Brilliant, I am glad to see you. [*Bows awkwardly.*

*Sir Bril.* You do me honour, sir. I hope you left my lady well.

*Sir Bash.* I can't say, sir; I am not her physician.

*Sir Bril.* [*Aside.*] An absurd brute! Lovemore, I'll just step and pay a short visit to our friend over the way.

*Love.* Why in such a hurry?

*Sir Bril.* I shall return immediately. I'll be with you before you are dressed. Sir Bashful, I kiss your hand. [*Exit.*

*Sir Bash.* I am glad he is gone. I have something, Mr Lovemore, that I want to advise with you about.

*Love.* Have you?

*Sir Bash.* I have had another brush with my wife.

*Love.* I am sorry for it, sir Bashful. [*Aside.*] I am perfectly glad of it.

*Sir Bash.* Pretty warm the quarrel was. She took it in a high tone. 'Sir Bashful,' says she, 'I wonder you will disgrace yourself at this 'rate. You know my pin-money is not sufficient. 'The mercer and every body dunning me! I 'can't go on after this fashion,' says she, and then something about her quality. You know, Mr Lovemore, [*Smiling.*] she is a woman of high quality.

*Love.* Yes, and a very fine woman.

*Sir Bash.* No, no, no; not much of that——and yet [*Looks at him and smiles.*] Do you think her a fine woman?

*Love.* Undoubtedly; where do you see any body that outshines her?

*Sir Bash.* Why to be sure—[*Smiling.*] one does not often see her eclipsed. I think she is what you may call a fine woman. She keeps good company.

*Love.* The very best.

*Sir Bash.* Yes, yes; your tiptop, none else.—And yet to encourage her too far were dangerous. Too complying a husband makes but a sorry figure in the eyes of the world.

*Love.* The world will talk, sir Bashful.

*Sir Bash.* Too fast, Mr Lovemore. Their tongues will run on, and one does not like to give them a subject. I answered her stoutly: Madam, says I, a fig for your quality: I am master in my own house, and who do you think——[*Winks at* LOVEMORE.] putting myself in a pas-

sion, you know—Who do you think is to pay for your cats, and your dogs, and your monkeys, and your squirrels, and your gaming debts?

*Love.* How could you? That was sharply said.

*Sir Bash.* Yes; I gave it her. But, for all that, I am main good-natured at the bottom.

*Love.* You was not in earnest, then?

*Sir Bash.* No, no; that's the point: a man must keep up his own dignity. I'll tell you what I did.

*Love.* Well;—you did what's proper, I dare say.

*Sir Bash.* I hope you'll think so. Don't laugh at me.———Come, I will tell you. I went to her mercer slily, and paid him the money.

[*Smiling.*

*Love.* Did you!

*Sir Bash.* [*Looking alarmed.*] Was not it right?

*Love.* It was elegant.

*Sir Bash.* I am glad you approve. I took care to save appearances. One would not have the world know it.

*Love.* By no means.

*Sir Bash.* It would make them think me too uxorious.

*Love.* So it would. [*Aside.*] I must encourage that notion. While you live, guard against being too uxurious. Though our wives deserve our fondness the world will laugh at us; and hark ye, if our wives don't deserve it, they'll laugh at us the more.

*Sir Bash.* I know it. And so, says I, Mr Lutestring, there's your money, but tell no body that I paid it slily.

*Love.* Why, that's doing a genteel thing by stratagem. Admirably contrived!

*Sir Bash.* I think it was. But I have a deeper secret for you.

*Love.* Have you?

*Sir Bash.* I have. May I trust you?

*Love.* Now, there you hurt me. I feel that, sir Bashful.

*Sir Bash.* I beg your pardon. I know you are my friend. I have great confidence in you. You must know—look ye, Mr Lovemore——you must know———

*Enter* MUSLIN.

*Mus.* My lady desires to know if you chuse a dish of tea this morning.

*Love.* Po! ridiculous!—tell your mistress—go about your business. [*Turns her out.*

*Sir Bash.* I see how it is. He does not care a cherry-stone for his wife.

*Love.* Such impertinence!——Well, sir Bashful?

*Sir Bash.* He does not value her a pinch of snuff. [*Aside.*

*Love.* Well, I am all attention.

*Sir Bash.* It does not signify. A foolish affair; I won't trouble you.

*Love.* Nay, that's unkind. It will be no trouble.

*Sir Bash.* Well, well, I—I—Do you think Muslin did not overhear us?

*Love.* Not a syllable. Come, we are safe.

*Sir Bash.* I don't know but—let me ask you a question first. Have you any regard for your lady?

*Love.* The highest value for her. But then, you know, appearances——

*Sir Bash.* Right!—I repose it with you. You must know, Mr Lovemore, as I told you, I am at the bottom very good natured, and though it may be thought——we are interrupted again.

*Enter* SIR BRILLIANT.

*Sir Bril.* Lovemore, I have paid my visit.

*Love.* Pshaw!—this is unlucky——You are as good as your word, sir Brilliant.

*Sir Bril.* Perhaps you have business?

*Sir Bash.* No, no business—[*Turns to* LOVE.] there's no proceeding now——I was going, sir Brilliant. Mr Lovemore, I wish you a good day.

*Love.* Po! Prithee, you shan't leave me yet.

*Sir Bash.* I must; I can't stay. [*Aside to* LOVE.] Another time. Suppose you call at my house at one o'clock?

*Love.* With all my heart.

*Sir Bash.* Do so; nobody shall interrupt us. Mr Lovemore, I take my leave. Sir Brilliant, I kiss your hand. You won't forget, Mr Lovemore?

*Love.* Oh! no; depend upon me.

*Sir Bash.* A good morning. He is the only friend I have.

[*Exit* SIR BASH.

*Love.* Ha, ha! you broke in, in the most critical moment! He was just going to be delivered of his secret.

*Sir Bril.* I beg your pardon. How could you let me?

*Love.* Nay, no matter. I shall worm it out of him.

*Enter* MUSLIN.

*Mus.* My lady, sir, is quite impatient.

*Love.* Po! for ever teasing! I'll wait upon her presently. [*Exit* MUS.

*Sir Bril.* I'll step and chat with her while you dress. May I take the liberty?

*Love.* You know you may: no ceremony. How could you ask me such a question?——Apropos, sir Brilliant, I want a word with you. Step with me into the study for a moment.

*Sir Bril.* I attend you.

*Love.* Poor sir Bashful!——ha, ha!——a ridiculous, unaccountable——What does he mean?

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Another apartment.*

MRS LOVEMORE *at her tea-table.*

*Mrs Love.* This trash of tea! I don't know why I drink so much of it. Heigho!—What keeps Muslin? Surely never was an unhappy woman treated with such cruel indifference; nay, with such open, such undisguised insolence of gallantry.

*Enter* MUSLIN.

Well, Muslin, have you seen his prime minister?

*Mus.* Yes, ma'am, I have seen Mr William. He says his master is going out, according to the old trade, and he does not expect to see him again till to-morrow morning. Mr Lovemore is now in the study. Sir Brilliant Fashion is with him: I heard them, as I passed by the door, laughing as loud as two actors in a comedy.

*Mrs Love.* About some precious mischief, I'll be sworn, and all at my cost. Heigho!

*Mus.* Dear Ma'am, why chagrin yourself about a vile man, that is not worth——no, as I hope for mercy, not worth a single sigh!

*Mrs Love.* What can I do, Muslin?

*Mus.* Do, ma'am!—If I was as you, I'd do for him. If I could not cure my grief, I'd find some comfort; that's what I would.

*Mrs Love.* Comfort? alas! there is none for me.

*Mus.* And whose fault, then? Would any body but you—It provokes me to think of it—Would any but you—young, handsome, with wit, graces, talents—would any body, with so many accomplishments, sit at home here, as melancholy as a poor servant out of place?—And all for what? For a husband! And such a husband! What do you think the world will say of you, ma'am?

*Mrs Love.* I care not what they say; I am tired of the world, and the world may be tired of me, if it will. My troubles are to myself only, and I must endeavour to bear them. Who knows what patience may do? If Mr Lovemore has any feeling left, my conduct and his own heart may one day incline him to do me justice.

*Mus.* But, dear ma'am, that's waiting for dead men's shoes. Incline him to do you justice!—What signifies expecting and expecting? Give me a bird in the hand. If all the women in London, who happen to be in your case, were to sit down and die of the spleen, what would become of the public places? They might turn Vauxhall to a hop-garden; make a brewhouse of Ranelagh, and let both the play-houses to a methodist-preacher. We should not have the racketing we have now. John, let the horses be put to——John, go to my lady Trumpabout, and invite her to a small party of twenty or thirty card-tables. John, run to my lady Catgut, and let her know I'll wait upon her ladyship to the opera. John, run, as fast as ever you can, with my compliments to Mr Varney, and tell him, it will be the death of me, if I have not a box for the new play. Lord bless you, ma'am, they rantipole it about this town, with as unconcerned looks, and as florid outsides, as if they were treated at home like so many goddesses: though every body knows possession has ungoddessed them all long ago, and their husbands care no more for them, no, by jingo, no more than they care for their husbands!

*Mrs Love.* At what a rate you run on!

*Mus.* It is enough to make a body run on. If every body thought like you, ma'am—

*Mrs Love.* If every body loved like me!

*Mus.* A brass thimble for love, if it is not returned by love. What the deuce is here to do? Love for love is something: but to love alone, where's the good of that? Shall I go and fix my heart upon a man, who shall despise me for that very reason? And ay, says he, 'Poor fool! I see 'she adores me. The woman is well enough, 'only she has one inconvenient circumstance 'about her; I am married to her, and marriage 'is the devil!'

*Mrs Love.* Will you have done?

*Mus.* I have not half done, ma'am. And when the vile man goes a-rogueing, he smiles impudently in your face, 'and I am going to the cho-'colate-house, my dear; amuse yourself in the 'mean time, my love.' Fy upon them! I know them all. Give me a husband that will enlarge the circle of my innocent pleasures: but a husband now-a-days is no such thing. A husband now is nothing but a scare-crow, to shew you the fruit, but touch it if you dare. The devil's in them! the Lord forgive me for swearing! A husband is a mere bugbear, a snap-dragon, a monster; that is to say, if one makes him so, then he is a monster indeed; and if one do not make him so, then he behaves like a monster; and of the two evils, by my troth——But here, ma'am, here comes one who can tell you all about it. Here comes sir Brilliant: ask his advice, ma'am.

*Mrs Love.* His advice?——Ask advice of the man, who has estranged Mr Lovemore's affections from me?

*Mus.* Well, I protest and vow, I think sir Brilliant a very pretty gentleman. He is the very pink of the fashion. He dresses fashionably, lives fashionably, wins your money fashionably, loses his own fashionably, and does every thing fashionably; and then he looks so lively, and so much to say, and so never at a loss!—But here he comes.

*Enter* SIR BRILLIANT.

*Sir Bril.* Mrs Lovemore, my dear madam, always in a vis-a-vis party with your *suivante?*—Afford me your pardon, if I say this does a little wear the appearance of being out of humour with the world.

*Mrs Love.* Far from it, sir Brilliant. We were engaged in your panegyric.

*Sir Bril.* My panegyric? Then am I come most apropos to give the portrait a few finishing touches. Mr Lovemore, as soon as he is dressed, will wait upon you: in the mean time, I can help you to some anecdotes, which will enable you to colour your canvas a little higher.

*Mrs Love.* Among those anecdotes, I hope you will not omit the bright exploit of seducing Mr Lovemore from all domestic happiness?

[*She makes a sign to* MUSLIN *to go.*

*Sir Bril.* I, madam?—Let me perish, if ever—

*Mrs Love.* Oh! sir, I can make my observations.

*Sir Bril.* May fortune eternally forsake me, and beauty frown on me, if I am conscious of any plot upon earth!

*Mrs Love.* Don't assert too strongly, sir Brilliant.

*Sir Bril.* May I never throw a winning cast—

*Mrs Love.* It is in vain to deny it, sir.

*Sir Bril.* May I lose the next sweepstakes, if I have ever, in thought, word, or deed, been accessary to his infidelity! I alienate the affections of Mr Lovemore! Consider, madam, how would this tell in Westminster Hall? Sir Brilliant Fashion, what say you? guilty of this indictment, or not guilty? Not guilty, poss. Thus issue is joined. You enter the court: but, my dear madam, veil those graces that adorn your person: abate the fire of those charms: so much beauty will corrupt the judges: give me a fair trial.

*Mrs Love.* And thus you think to laugh it away.

*Sir Bril.* Nay, hear me out. You appear in court: you charge the whole upon me, without a syllable as to the how, when, and where: no proof positive; the prosecution ends, and I begin my defence.

*Mrs Love.* And, by playing these false colours, you think I am to be amused?

*Sir Bril.* Nay, Mrs Lovemore, I am now upon my defence. Only hear.—You will please to consider, gentlemen of the jury, that Mr Lovemore is not a minor, nor I his guardian. He loves gaiety, pleasure, and enjoyment: is it my fault? He is possessed of talents, and a taste for pleasure, which he knows how to gratify: can I restrain him? He knows the world, makes the most of life, and plucks the fruit that grows around him: am I to blame? This is the whole affair. How say you, gentlemen of the jury?—Not guilty. There, you see how it is. I have cleared myself.

*Mrs Love.* Brisk, lively, and like yourself, sir Brilliant! But if you can imagine this bantering way——

*Sir Bril.* Acquitted by my country, madam; fairly acquitted.

*Mrs Love.* After the very edifying counsel which you give to Mr Lovemore, this loose strain is not in the least surprising. And, sir, your late project———

*Sir Bril.* My late project!

*Mrs Love.* Your late project, sir. Not content with leading Mr Lovemore into a thousand scenes of dissipation, you have introduced him lately to your Mrs Bellmour. You understand me, sir?

*Sir Bril.* Madam, he does not so much as know the widow Bellmour.

*Mrs Love.* Nay, sir Brilliant, have a care: justify it, if you can, or give it a turn of wit.—There is no occasion to hazard yourself too far.

*Sir Bril.* Falsehood I disdain, madam; and I, sir Brilliant Fashion, declare that Mr Lovemore is not acquainted with the widow Bellmour.—And if he was, what then? Do you know the lady?

*Mrs Love.* I know her, sir? A person of that character?

*Sir Bril.* Oh! I see you don't know her; but I will let you into her history. Pray, be seated. You shall know her whole history, and then judge for yourself. The widow Bellmour, madam———

*Love.* [*Within.*]—William, are the horses put to?

*Sir Bril.* We are interrupted.

*Enter* LOVEMORE.

*Love.* Very well: let the carriage be brought round directly. How do you do, my dear? Sir Brilliant, I beg your pardon. My love, you don't answer me: how do you do this morning?

[*With an air of cold civility.*

*Mrs Love.* A little indisposed in mind: but indisposition of the mind is of no consequence: nobody pities it.

*Love.* I beg you pardon, Mrs Lovemore. Indisposition of the mind——Sir Brilliant, that's a mighty pretty ring on your finger.

*Sir Bril.* A bauble: will you look at it?

[*Gives the ring.*

*Mrs Love.* Though I have but few obligations to sir Brilliant, I suppose I am to ascribe to him the favour of this visit, Mr Lovemore?

*Love.* [*Looking at the ring, and laughing.*]—Now, there you wrong me. Your inquiries about my health have been very obliging this morning, and I came to return the compliment before I got out. It is set very neatly.

[*Gives back the ring.*

*Mrs Love.* Are you going out, sir?

*Love.* A matter of business—How I do hae business! But business—[*Examining his ruffles.*]—business must be done. Pray, is there any news? Any news, my dear?

*Mrs Love.* It would be news to me, sir, if you would be kind enough to let me know whether I may expect the favour of your company at dinner to-day?

*Love.* It would be impertinent in me to answer such a question; for I can give no direct answer to it. I am the slave of events; just as

things happen; perhaps I may; perhaps not.—But don't let me be of any inconvenience to you. Is it material where a body eats? Have you heard what happened to me?

[*Aside to* SIR BRILLIANT.

*Sir Bril.* When, and where?

*Love.* A word in your ear—with your permission, madam?

*Mrs Love.* That cold, contemptuous civility, Mr Lovemore——

*Love.* Po! Prithee, now, how can you? that is very peevish, and very ill-natured.—[*Turning to* SIR BRILLIANT.]—I lost every thing I played for, after you went. The foreigner and he understand one another. I beg your pardon, Mrs Lovemore: it was only about an affair at the opera.

*Mrs Love.* The opera, or any thing, is more agreeable than my company.

*Love.* Now, there again you wrong me.—[*To* SIR BRILLIANT.]—We dine at the St Alban's.—How can you, Mrs Lovemore? I make it a point not to incommode you. You possibly may have some private party; and it would be unpolite in me to obstruct your schemes of pleasure. Would not it, sir Brilliant?

*Sir Bril.* Oh! Gothic to the last degree!

*Love.* Very true; vulgar and mechanic!

[*Both stand laughing.*

*Mrs Love.* Go on; make sport for yourselves, gentlemen.

*Love.* Ho, ho, ho! I am sore with laughing.—If you, madam, have arranged an agreeable party, for me to be present, it would look as if we lived together like sir Bashful Constant and his lady; who are always, like two game-cocks, ready armed to goad and spur one another. Hey! Sir Brilliant?

*Sir Bril.* Oh, the very thing: or, like sir Theodore Traffic, at Tunbridge, taking his wife under the arm in the public rooms, and 'Come 'along home, I tell you.'

*Love.* Exactly so.—[*Both continue laughing.*]—Odds my life! I shall be beyond my time.—[*Looks at his watch.*]—Any commands into the city, my dear?

*Mrs Love.* Commands! No, sir, I have no commands.

*Love.* I have an appointment at my banker's, sir Brilliant. You know old Discount?

*Sir Bril.* He that was in parliament, and had the large contract?

*Love.* The same: Entire Butt, I think, was the name of his borough. Can I set you down?

*Sir Bril.* No; my carriage waits. I shall rattle half the town over, presently.

*Love.* As you will. Sir Brilliant will entertain you, madam. *Au revoir*, my love. Sir Brilliant, yours. Who waits there? [*Exit singing.*

*Sir Bril.* Bon voyage. You see, madam, that I don't deprive you of his company.

*Mrs Love.* Your influence is now unnecessary. It is grown habitual to him: he will drive to your Mrs Bellmour, I suppose.

*Sir Bril.* Apropos; that brings us back to the little history I was going to give you of that lady. What is your charge against her? That she is amiable? Granted. Young, gay, rich, handsome, with enchanting talents, it is no wonder all the pretty fellows are on their knees to her. Her manner so entertaining! That quickness of transition from one thing to another! That round of variety! and every new attitude does so become her; and she has such a feeling heart, and, with an air of giddiness, so nice a conduct!

*Mrs Love.* Mighty well, sir: she is a very vestal. Finish your portrait. A vestal, from your school of painting, must be a curiosity——But how comes it, sir, if she is this wonder, that your honourable proposals are at an end there?

*Sir Bril.* Compulsion, madam: it is not voluntary. My lord Etheridge is the happy man. I thought he was out of the kingdom; but his lordship is with her every evening. I can scarce gain admittance; and so all that remains for me, is to do justice to the lady, and console myself in the best way I can, for the insufficiency of my pretensions.

*Mrs Love.* Am I to believe all this?

*Sir Bril.* May the first woman I pay my addresses to, strike me to the centre with a supercilious eye-brow, if every syllable is not minutely true! So that, you see, I am not the cause of your inquietude. There is not in the world a person, who more earnestly aspires to prove the tender esteem he bears you. I have long panted for an opportunity—by all that's soft, she listens to me!—[*Aside.*]—I have long panted, madam, for a tender moment like this——

*Mrs Love.* [*Looking gravely at him.*]—Sir!

*Sir Bril.* I have panted with all the ardour, which charms, like yours, must kindle in every heart——

*Mrs Love.* [*Walks away.*]—This liberty, sir—

*Sir Bril.* Consider, madam: we have both cause of discontent; both disappointed; both crossed in love; and the least we can do is both to join, and sweeten each other's cares.

*Mrs Love.* And your friend, sir, who has just left you——

*Sir Bril.* He, madam, for a long time—I have seen it, with vexation seen it—yes, he has long been false to honour, love, and you.

*Mrs Love.* Sir Brilliant, I have done. You take my wrongs too much to heart, sir.

[*Rings a bell.*

*Sir Bril.* Those eyes, that tell us what the sun is made of, those hills of driven snow!

*Mrs Love.* Will nobody answer there?

*Enter* MUSLIN.

*Sir Bril.* Madam, I desist: when you are in better humour, recollect what I have said. Your adorer takes his leave. Sir Brilliant, mind your

hits, and her strait-laced virtue will surrender at last. Madam———

[*Bows respectfully. Exit.*

*Mus.* As I live and breathe, madam, if I was as you, I would not fluster myself about it.

*Mrs Love.* About what!

*Mus.* What signifies mincing the matter? I heard it all.

*Mrs Love.* You did? Did you?

[*Looks angrily.*

*Mus.* Madam?

*Mrs Love.* Impertinence!—[*Walks about.*]—Oh, Mr Lovemore! To make his character public, and render him the topic of every tea-table throughout this town! I must avoid that.

*Mus.* What the deuce is here to do? An unmannerly thing, for to go for to huff me in this manner! [*Aside.*

*Mrs Love.* That would only widen the breach; and, instead of neglect, might call forth resentment, and settle, at last, into a fixed aversion; lawyers, parting, and separate maintenance!—What must be done?

*Mus.* What is she thinking of now? A sulky thing, not to be more familiar with such a friend as I am. Did you speak to me, madam?

*Mrs Love.* It may succeed; suppose I try it? Muslin?

*Mus.* Madam? [*Running to her.*

*Mrs Love.* You heard sir Brilliant say that Mr Lovemore is not acquainted with the widow?

*Mus.* Lard, madam, he's as full of tricks as a French milliner. I know he does visit there: I know it from William; I'll be hanged in my own garters, if he does not!

*Mrs Love.* I know not what to do. Let my chair be got ready.

*Mus.* Your chair, madam! Are you going out?

*Mrs Love.* Let me hear no more questions: do as I order you. [*Exit.*

*Mus.* Which way is the wind now? No matter; she does not know what she'd be at. If she would but take my advice—go abroad, visit every where, see the world, throw open her doors, give balls, assemblies, concerts; sing, dance, dress, spend all her money, run in debt, ruin her husband; there would be some sense in that: the man would stay at home, then, to quarrel with her. She would have enough of his company.—But no; mope, mope for ever; heigho! tease, tease; Muslin, step to William; where's his master? When did he come home? How long has he been up? A fine life, truly! I love to be in the fashion, for my part. Bless me, I had like to have forgot! Mrs Marmalet comes to my route to-night. She might as well stay away: she is nothing but mere lumber. The formal thing won't play higher than shilling whist. How the devil does she think I can make a shilling party for her? There is no such a thing now-a-days; nobody plays shilling whist now, unless I was to invite the trade's-people; but I shan't let myself down for Madam Marmalet, that I promise her.

[*Exit.*

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An apartment at* SIR BASHFUL CONSTANT'S.

*Enter* SIR BASHFUL.

*Sir Bash.* DID not I hear a rap at the door? Yes, yes, I did; I am right. The carriage is just now driving away. Who answers there? Sideboard! step hither, Sideboard. I must know who it is: my wife keeps the best company in England. Hold, I must be wary. Servants love to pry into their masters' secrets.

*Enter* SIDEBOARD.

*Sir Bash.* Whose carriage was that at the door?

*Side.* The duchess of Hurricane, your honour.

*Sir Bash.* The duchess of Hurricane?—[*Walks aside, and smiles.*]—A woman of great rank! What did she want?

*Side.* She has left this card for my lady.

*Sir Bash.* A card? Let me see it.—[*Reads.*]—'The duchess of Hurricane presents compliments 'to lady Constant. She has left the hounds and 'foxes, and the brutes that gallop after them, to 'their own dear society for the rest of the winter. Her grace keeps Wednesdays at Hurricane 'House for the rest of the winter.'—Make me thankful, here's a card from a duchess! What have you there?

*Side.* A parcel of cards, that have been left here this morning.

*Sir Bash.* All these in one morning?—[*Looks at them.*]—Why, I may as well keep an inn; may as well keep the coach and horses in Piccadilly.—[*Reads fast.*]—Lady Riot—Mrs Allnight—the duchess of Carmine—look ye there, another duchess!—Lady Basset—lord Pleurisie—the countess of Ratifie—sir Richard Lungs—lord Laudanum—sir Charles Valerian—lady Hectick—lady Mary Gabble—I cannot bear all this, Sideboard—[*Aside, and smiling.*]—I cannot bear the pleasure of it: all people of tip-top condition to visit my wife!

*Enter* FURNISH.

*Sir Bash.* What's the matter, Furnish?

*Fur.* The matter, sir? Nothing's the matter.

*Sir Bash.* What are you about? Where are you going? What have you to do now?

*Fur.* Only to tell the chairmen they must take

Black George with his flambeau with them this evening, and carry the chair to pay visits for my lady.

*Sir Bash.* An empty chair to pay visits! what polite ways people of fashion have got of being intimate with each other!—[*Aside.*]—Absurd as it is, I am glad to see my wife keep pace with the best of them. I laugh at it, and yet like it. 'Zounds! I shall be found out by my servants.—I tell you, Sideboard, and you, Mrs Busy Body, that your mistress leads a life of noise and hurry, and cards and dice, and vanity and nonsense, and I am resolved to bear it no longer. Don't I hear her coming?

*Fur.* My lady is coming, sir.

*Sir Bash.* [*Aside, and smiling.*] She looks charmingly.—Now, I'll tell her roundly a piece of my mind. You shall see who commands in this house.

*Enter* LADY CONSTANT.

*Sir Bash.* [*Steals a look.*] I could almost give up the point when I look at her.—So, madam, I have had my house full of duns again to-day?

*Lady Con.* Obliging creatures, to call so often. What did they want?

*Sir Bash.* Want!—what should they want but money?

*Lady Con.* And you paid them, I suppose?

*Sir Bash.* You suppose!——'Sdeath, madam, what do you take me for?

*Lady Con.* I took you for a husband: my brother prescribed you. But his prescription has done me no good.

*Sir Bash.* Nor me either: I have had a bitter pill of it.

*Lady Con.* But the pill was gilded for you. My fortune, I take it, has paid off the old family mortgage on your estate.

*Sir Bash.* And, at the rate you go on, a new mortgage will swallow up my estate.—I see you are an ungrateful woman.

*Lady Con.* That is, as you keep the account.

*Sir Bash.* And my accounts will shew it. Day after day, nothing but extravagance to gratify your vanity! Did not I go into parliament to please you? Did not I go down to the borough of Smoke-and-Sot, and get drunk there for a whole month together? Did not I get mobbed at the George and Vulture? and pelted and horse-whipped the day before the election? And was not I obliged to steal out of the town in a rabbit-cart? And all this to be somebody, as you call it! Did not I stand up in the House to make a speech, to shew what an orator you had married? And did not I expose myself? Did I know whether I stood upon my head or my heels for half an hour together? And did not a great man from the Treasury-bench tell me never to speak again?

*Lady Con.* And why not take his advice?

*Sir Bash.* What, in the name of common sense, had I do in parliament? My country! What's my country to me? The debts of the nation, and your gaming debts, are nothing to me. I must help to pay both, must I? I can vote against taxes, and can advertise in the gazette to secure me from your extravagance. I have not lived in the Temple for nothing.

*Fur.* He slept there, and calls it studying the law.

*Sir Bash.* Hold you your tongue, Mrs Pert; leave the room. Go both about your business.

[*Exeunt* FURNISH *and* SIDEBOARD.

[*Aside.*] I have kept it up before my servants. [*Looks at* LADY CONSTANT.] She is a fine woman, after all!

*Lady Con.* Is there never to be an end of this usage, sir? Am I to be for ever made unhappy by your humours?

*Sir Bash.* Humours! good sense and sound judgment, in the fine lady's dictionary, are to be called humours?

*Lady Con.* And your humours are now grown insupportable.

*Sir Bash.* Your profusion is insupportable. At the rate you go on, how am I to find money for my next election?—If you would but talk this matter over coolly—She talks like an angel, and I wish I could say—[*Aside.*]—the same of myself.——What will the world think?—Only command your temper—what will they think, if I am seen to encourage your way of life?

*Lady Con.* Amuse yourself that way, sir.—Avoid one error, and run into the opposite extreme.

*Sir Bash.* [*Aside.*] There; a translation from Horace! *Dum vitant stulti vitia*—She is a notable woman!

*Lady Con.* Let me tell you, there is not in life a more ridiculous sight, than the person who guards, with imaginary wisdom, against one giant vice, and leaves himself open to a million of absurdities.

*Sir Bash.* [*Aside.*] I am nothing to her in argument—she has a tongue that can reason me out of my senses.—I could almost find it in my heart to tell her the whole truth.—You know, my lady Constant, that when you want any thing in reason—

*Lady Con.* Is it unreasonable to live with decency? Is it unreasonable to keep the company my rank and education have entitled me to? Is it unreasonable to conform to the modes of life, when your fortune can so well afford it?

*Sir Bash.* [*Aside.*] She is a very reasonable woman; and I wish I had but half her sense—You know I am good-natured in the main, and if a sum of money within a moderate compass—If a brace of hundreds—[*Aside.*] why should not I make it three?—I know that you have contracted habits of life, and [*In a softened tone.*] habit, I know, is not easily conquered: and if three [*Smiling.*] hundred pounds will prevent disputes,

why [*Smiling.*] as to the matter of three hundred pound———

*Enter* FURNISH, *with a band-box.*

*Fur.* Your ladyship's things from the milliner's.

*Sir Bash.* Death and fury, this woman has overheard me! Three hundred pounds, madam! [*In a violent passion.*] let me tell you that three hundred pounds—what right have you to shovel away three hundred pounds?

*Lady Con.* Why does the man fly out into such a passion?

*Sir Bash.* I will allow no such doings in my house. Don't I often come when my hall is besieged with a parcel of powder-monkey servants? And did not I the other day, before I could get into my own doors, entangle myself among the chairmen's poles, and was not I confined there, like a man in the stocks?

*Lady Con.* Why would you be so awkward?

*Sir Bash.* An eternal scene of routs and drums. Have not I seen you put a fee-simple of a score of my best acres upon a single card? And have not I muttered to myself, if that woman was as much in love with me as she is with Pam, what an excellent wife she would make!

*Lady Con.* Pam is very obliging. Why won't you strive to be as agreeable?

*Sir Bash.* 'Sdeath, madam, you are so fond of play, that I should not wonder to see my next child marked on the forehead with a pair of royal aces.

*Fur.* I am sure you deserve to be marked on the forehead with a pair of—

*Sir Bash.* Malapert hussy! do you meddle? Begone this moment! [*Exit* FURNISH.

*Lady Con.* Fy upon it, sir Bashful! I am tired of blushing for you.

*Sir Bash.* I am afraid I have gone too far: she is ashamed of me. [*Aside.*

*Lady Con.* You agreed to a separation the other day, and there remains nothing but to execute articles, and make an end of all this disquiet.

*Sir Bash.* A separate maintenance will go but a little way to answer the bawling of milliners, mercers, jewellers, and gaming debts.

*Lady Con.* It will purchase content; and nothing can obtain that under your roof.

*Sir Bash.* [*Aside.*] I have shot my bolt too far—I fancy, my lady Constant, that you don't know me. We might explain matters, and—'sdeath! [*Aside.*] I am going to blab——I say, madam, if you understand me rightly——as to the authority of a husband, I might, perhaps, be brought to give it up, in part at least; and if nobody was the wiser, I might connive—Po! confusion! interrupted again by that———

*Enter* FURNISH.

*Fur.* A servant from Mrs Lovemore, madam, to know—

*Sir Bash.* The authority of a husband I never will give up.—

*Lady Con.* A storm, a whirlwind is fitter to converse with.

*Sir Bash.* I will storm like a whirlwind in my own house. I have done, madam: you are an ungovernable woman—[*Aside, and smiling.*] she is a charming woman; and if nobody saw it, I would let her govern me with all my heart.

[*Exit* SIR BASHFUL.

*Lady Con.* Did any body ever see such behaviour?

*Fur.* Never; and how your ladyship bears it, I can't tell.

*Lady Con.* That it should be my fate to be married to such a quicksand! What does Mrs Lovemore say?

*Fur.* If your ladyship will be at home, she intends to do herself the pleasure of waiting upon you, madam.

*Lady Con.* Very well; I shall be at home. Upon recollection, I want to see her. Let the servant wait: I'll write an answer.

[*Exit* LADY CONSTANT.

SCENE II.—*Another apartment.*

*Enter* SIR BASHFUL *and* LOVEMORE.

*Sir Bash.* Walk in, Mr Lovemore, walk in.—I am heartily glad to see you. This is kind.

*Love.* I am ready, you see, to attend the call of friendship.

*Sir Bash.* Mr Lovemore, you are a friend, indeed.

*Love.* You do me honour, sir Bashful. And your lady, how does she do?

*Sir Bash.* Perfectly well: in great spirits.—[*Smiling at* LOVEMORE.] I never saw her look better: but we have had t'other skirmish since I saw you.

*Love.* Another?

*Sir Bash.* Ay, another; and I did not bate her an ace. She is a rare one to argue. She is fit to discuss a point with any man. Nobody like her. Wit at will. I thought I managed the dispute, and that I should soon have had her at what you call a *non-plus.* But no, no; no such thing; she can give you a sharp turn in a moment.

*Love.* Ay!

*Sir Bash.* Give her her due, I am nothing to her. I thought I had her fast; but she went round me quick as lightning: and would you believe it? [*Looks highly pleased.*] She did not leave me a word to say.

*Love.* Well! that was hard upon you.

*Sir Bash.* No, not hard at all. Those little victories I don't mind. You know I told you I had something for your private ear. Have you observed nothing odd and singular in me?

*Love.* Not in the least. In the whole circle of my acquaintance, I know nobody so little tinged with oddity.

*Sir Bash.* What, have you seen nothing?——[*Laughs.*] Have you remarked nothing particular in regard to my wife?

*Love.* Why, you don't live happy with her: but that is not a singular case.

*Sir Bash.* But I tell you—this must be in confidence——I am, at the bottom, a very odd fellow.

*Love.* You do yourself injustice, Sir Bashful.

*Sir Bash.* No, not in the least. It is too true—I am in the main a very odd fellow; I am indeed; as odd a fish as lives; and you must have seen it before now.

*Love.* I see it! I am not apt to spy defects in my friends. What can this be? You are not jealous, I hope?

*Sir Bash.* You have not hit the right nail on the head. No, not jealous. Do her justice, I am safe as to that point. My lady has high notions of honour. No, it is not that.

*Love.* Not a ray of light to guide me: explain, sir Bashful.

*Sir Bash.* [*Smiling at him.*] You could never have imagined it. But, first, let me shut this door.

*Love.* What whim has got possession of him now?

*Sir Bash.* Mr Lovemore, I have great dependence upon you. I am going to make a discovery. I blush at the very thought of it! [*Turns away.*

*Love.* Be a man, sir Bashful; out with it at once; let me advise you.

*Sir Bash.* The very thing I want. The affair is—but then if he should betray me! Mr Lovemore, I doubt you, and yet esteem you. Some men there are, who, when a confidence is reposed in them, take occasion, from thence, to hold a hank over their friend, and tyrannize him all the rest of his days.

*Love.* O fy! this is ungenerous. True friendship is of another quality: it feels from sympathy; honour is the active principle; and the strictest secrecy is an inviolable rule.

*Sir Bash.* Mr Lovemore, I have no further doubt—stay; did not you hear a noise? Don't I see a shadow moving under the bottom of that door? [*Goes to the door.*

*Love.* What has got into his head?

*Sir Bash.* [*Looking out.*] Servants have a way of listening.

*Love.* Rank jealousy! he has it through the very brain.

*Sir Bash.* No, no; all's safe. Mr Lovemore, I will make you the depositary, the faithful depositary of a secret: let it pass from the bottom of my heart to the inmost recess of yours: there let it rest, concealed from every prying eye. My inclination—There! I see a laugh already forming in every feature of your face.

*Love.* Then, my face is no true index of my mind. Were you to know the agitations in which you keep me by this suspense——

*Sir Bash.* I believe it. To make an end at once, my inclinations are totally changed—no, not changed, but they are not what they seemed to be. Love is the passion that possesses me—I am in love, and—[*Turns from him.*] and I am ashamed of myself!

*Love.* Ashamed! love is a noble passion: but don't let me hear any more about it. Lady Constant will discover all, and then the blame will fall on me. If your heart revolts from her, don't let me be thought in league with you.——You need not involve me in a quarrel with her ladyship.

*Sir Bash.* You don't take me right. You are wide, quite wide of the mark. Hear me out.

*Love.* No, no more. You must excuse me.

*Sir Bash.* You shall hear me. The object of my passion, this charming woman, whom I dote on to distraction——

*Love.* Your pardon; I won't hear it—[*Walks away from him.*] When her ladyship hears of his gallantry, the devil is in the dice, if the spirit of revenge does not mould her to my purposes.

*Sir Bash.* [*Following* LOVEMORE.] I say, Mr Lovemore, this adorable creature——

*Love.* Keep your secret, sir Bashful. [*Avoiding him.*]

*Sir Bash.* [*Following him.*] Who looks so lovely in my eyes——

*Love.* Well; I don't desire to know her.

*Sir Bash.* You do know her. [*Following him.*] This idol of my heart——is my own wife.

*Love.* [*Stares at him.*] Your own wife?

*Sir Bash.* Yes, my own wife. [*Looks silly, and turns away.*] 'Tis all over with me: I am undone!

*Love.* This is the most unexpected discovery!

*Sir Bash.* Look ye there now! he laughs at me already.

*Love.* [*Aside.*] His wife must not know this. The grass is cut under my feet, if she ever hears a word of it.

*Sir Bash.* [*Aside.*] He is struck with amazement, and does not say a word to me.

*Love.* [*Aside.*] I must not encourage him.—And can this be possible, sir Bashful? In love with your own wife?

*Sir Bash.* Spare my confusion! I have made myself very ridiculous. [*Looks at him, and turns away.*] I know I have.

*Love.* Ridiculous! Far from it. Can it be wrong to love a valuable woman? Not to feel the impressions of beauty and of merit were downright insensibility; but then we should always admire with discretion. The folly of us married men consists in letting our wives perceive the vehemence with which we love; and the consequence is, we are enslaved for the rest of our lives. I could trust you with a secret, which, perhaps, would keep you in countenance. Could you imagine it? I love my wife.

*Sir Bash.* How?

*Love.* I am in love with my wife.

*Sir Bash.* Oh! no, no; hey! [*Looking highly pleased.*] you make me laugh. You don't love her, do you?

*Love.* Passionately, tenderly; with all the ardour of affection.

*Sir Bash.* Give me your hand. Ha! ha! I did not expect this. This is some relief. Ha! ha! you have made me happy. And have you led the life you have done all this time, on purpose to conceal your regard from her?

*Love.* For that very purpose. I esteem her; I love her; but I would not have her know it.

*Sir Bash.* No!

*Love.* Upon no consideration; nor would I have the world know it.

*Sir Bash.* Perfectly right.

*Love.* To be sure. Tell your wife that you esteem her good qualities, and admire her person, she cries, *Victoria*, falls to plundering, and then you must either break her chain, or wear it in the face of the world, a laughing-stock for all your acquaintance.

*Sir Bash.* That is what I have always been afraid of.

*Love.* Not without reason. The world delights in ridicule. Do you know, if our secrets were to transpire, that we should have nothing but wit, and raillery, and fleers, and taunts, flying about our ears?

*Sir Bash.* But I have taken good care. I have quarrelled with my lady ten times a-day, on purpose to cloak the affair, and prevent all suspicion.

*Love.* Admirable! I commend your prudence. Besides,—my lady Constant, you know, has some youthful vigour about her; a graceful person, and an eye that inflames desire; and desire at your time of life, you know——

*Sir Bash.* Po! it is not for that; that is nothing. I wear admirably well, Mr Lovemore.

*Love.* Do you?

*Sir Bash.* As young as ever: but I don't let her know it.

*Love.* Well! if you are discreet in that point, you are a very Machiavel!

*Sir Bash.* Yes, yes; I fight cunning. [*Laughs.*

*Love.* Let nothing betray you. Be upon your guard: that is my own plan exactly. You want no advice from me.

*Sir Bash.* Pardon me: you can assist me.—My dear brother sufferer, give me your hand. We can, in a sly way, be of great use to each other.

*Love.* As how?

*Sir Bash.* I'll tell you. There are some things which, you know, our wives expect to be done.

*Love.* So there are.——[*Aside.*] What the devil is he at now?

*Sir Bash.* Now, if you will assist me—

*Love.* You may depend upon my assistance.

*Sir Bash.* Thus it is: my wife, you know, keeps a power of company, and makes a great figure there. I could shew her in any company in England: I wish she could say the same of me.

*Love.* Why, truly, I wish she could.

*Sir Bash.* But that's out of the question. Now, if you will come into my scheme—It must be a deep secret—How? Is that Sir Brilliant's voice?

*Enter* SIR BRILLIANT.

*Sir Bril.* Sir Bashful, you see what attraction you have. Lovemore, I did not expect to see you here.

*Love.* Nor did I expect you, Sir Brilliant. [*Aside.*

*Sir Bash.* Confusion!—This unseasonable visit— [*Aside:*

*Sir Bril.* And your lady, is she at home, Sir Bashful?

*Sir Bash.* Her own people keep that account, sir: I know nothing of her.

*Sir Bril.* Nay, never talk slightingly of a lady, who possesses so many elegant accomplishments. She has spirit, sense, wit, and beauty.

*Sir Bash.* Spirit, sense, wit, and beauty! she has them all, sure enough.—Sir, I am no sworn appraiser, to take an inventory of her effects.—[*Aside.*] Hey, Lovemore! [*Looks at him, and laughs.*

*Love.* [*To* SIR BASHFUL.] Vastly well.

*Sir Bril.* Is her ladyship visible this morning?

*Sir Bash.* Whether she is visible, or not, is no business of mine; but I know she is unintelligible this morning, and incomprehensible this morning. She has the vapours; but your conversation, I suppose, will brighten her up for the rest of the day.

*Sir Bril.* Why, as it happens, I have the rarest piece of news to communicate to her! Lovemore, you know sir Amorous la Fool?

*Love.* He that was sheriff the other day? Came up with an address, and got himself knighted?

*Sir Bril.* The same. He declared he would live with his friends upon the same familiar footing as before, and his new dignities should make no alteration.

*Sir Bash.* I have seen the knight. What of him?

*Sir Bril.* Poor devil! he is in such a scrape!

*Sir Bash.* What's the matter? Bubbled at play, I suppose?

*Sir Bril.* Worse, much worse.

*Love.* He has been blackballed at one of the clubs?

*Sir Bash.* Or run through the body in a duel?

*Sir Bril.* Why, that's a scrape indeed: but it is not that.

*Sir Bash.* What then?

*Sir Bril.* So unfortunate a discovery; he is fallen in love—I cannot help laughing at him.

*Love.* Po! fallen in love with some coquette, who plays off her airs, and makes a jest of him.

*Sir Bash.* A young actress, may be, or an opera singer?

*Sir Bril.* No; you will never guess. Sir Bashful—like a silly devil, he is fallen in love with his own wife.

*Sir Bash.* Fallen in love with his own wife! [*Stares at him.*

*Sir Bril.* Yes; he has made up all quarrels; his jealousy is at an end; and he is to be upon his good behaviour for the rest of his life.—Could you expect this, Lovemore?

*Love.* No, sir; neither I, nor my friend, sir Bashful, expected this.

*Sir Bash.* It is a stroke of surprise to me. [*Looking uneasy.*

*Sir Bril.* I heard it at my lady Betty Scandal's; and we had such a laugh! the whole company were in astonishment: whist stood still, quadrille laid down the cards, and brag was in in suspense. Poor sir Amorous! it is very ridiculous; is not it, sir Bashful?

*Sir Bash.* Very ridiculous, indeed.—[*Aside.*] My own case, exactly, and my friend Lovemore's, too.

*Sir Bril.* The man is lost, undone, ruined, dead, and buried.

*Love.* [*Laughing.*] He will never be able to shew his face after this discovery.

*Sir Bril.* Oh, never, 'tis all over with him. Sir Bashful, this does not divert you; you don't enjoy it.

*Sir Bash.* Who, I?—I—I—nothing can be more pleasant, and—I—laugh as heartily as I possibly can. [*Forcing a laugh.*

*Sir Bril.* Lovemore, you remember Sir Amorous used to strut, and talk big, and truly he did not care a pinch of snuff for his wife, not he! pretended to be as much at ease as sir Bashful about his lady, and as much his own master as you yourself, or any man of pleasure about town.

*Love.* I remember him: But as to sir Bashful and myself, we know the world; we understand life.

*Sir Bash.* So we do; the world will never have such a story of us. Will they, Lovemore?

*Love.* Oh! we are free; we are out of the scrape.

*Sir Bril.* Sir Amorous la Fool will be a proverb. Adieu, for him, the side-box whisper, the soft assignation, and all the joys of freedom! He is retired with his Penelope to love one another in the country; and next winter they will come to town to hate one another.

*Sir Bash.* Do you think it will end so?

*Sir Bril.* No doubt of it. That is always the denouement of modern matrimony. But I have not told you the worst of his case. Our friend, sir Charles Wildfire, you know, was writing a comedy; and what do you think he has done? He has drawn the character of sir Amorous, and made him the hero of the play.

*Sir Bash.* What! put him into a comedy?

*Sir Bril.* Even so. It is called, 'The Amorous Husband; or, The Man in Love with his own wife.' Oh! oh! oh! oh!

*Love.* We must send in time for places. [*Laughs with* SIR BRILLIANT.

*Sir Bash.* Lovemore carries it with an air. [*Aside.*

*Sir Bril.* Yes, we must secure places. Sir Bashful, you shall be of the party.

*Sir Bash.* The party will be very agreeable. I shall enjoy the joke prodigiously! Ha! ha! [*Forces a laugh.*

*Love.* Yes, sir Bashful, we shall relish the humour. [*Looks at him, and laughs.*

*Sir Bril.* The play will have a run: the people of fashion will crowd after such a character.—I must drive to a million of places, and put it about; but first, with your leave, sir Bashful, I will take the liberty to give a hint of the affair to your lady. It will appear so ridiculous to her.

*Sir Bash.* Do you think it will?

*Sir Bril.* Without doubt: she has never met with any thing like it: has she, Lovemore?

*Love.* I fancy not: Sir Bashful, you take care of that.

*Sir Bash.* Yes, yes: I shall never be the town-talk.—Hey, Lovemore!

*Sir Bril.* Well, I'll step and pay my respects to my lady Constant. Poor sir Amorous! he will have his horns added to his coat of arms in a little time. Ha! ha! [*Exit.*

*Sir Bash.* There, you see how it is. I shall get lampooned, be-rhymed, and niched into a comedy.

*Love.* Po! never be frightened at this. Nobody knows of your weakness but myself; and I can't betray your secret for my own sake.

*Sir Bash.* Very true.

*Love.* This discovery shews the necessity of concealing our loves. We must act with caution. Give my lady no reason to suspect that you have the least kindness for her.

*Sir Bash.* Not for the world.

*Love.* Keep to that.

*Sir Bash.* I have done her a thousand kindnesses, but all by stealth; all in a sly way.

*Love.* Have you?

*Sir Bash.* Oh! a multitude. I'll tell you. She has been plaguing me a long time for an addition to her jewels. She wants a diamond cross, and a better pair of diamond buckles. Madam, says I, I will have no such trumpery; but then goes I, and bespeaks them of the first jeweller in town—all under the rose. The buckles are finished: worth five hundred! She will have them this very day, without knowing from what quarter they come—I can't but laugh at the contri-

vance—the man that brings them will run away directly, without saying a word.

[*Laughs heartily.*

*Love.* Sly, sly———You know what you are about.

*Sir Bash.* Ay, let me alone——[*Laughs with* LOVEMORE.] And then, to cover the design still more, when I see her wear her baubles, I can take occasion to be as jealous as bedlam.

*Love.* So you can: ha! ha!—[*Aside.*] I wish he may never be jealous of me in good earnest.

*Sir Bash.* Give me your hand. [*Looks at him, and laughs.*] I am safe, I think?

*Love.* [*Laughing with him.*] Perfectly safe—[*Aside.*] if it was not for his own folly,

*Sir Bash.* But I was telling you, Mr Lovemore:—we can be of essential use to each other.

*Love.* As how, pray?

*Sir Bash.* Why, my lady is often in want of money. It would be ridiculous in me to supply her. Now, if you will take the money from me, and pretend to lend it to her, out of friendship, you know——

*Love.* Nothing can be better—[*Aside.*] Here is a fellow pimping for his own horns.——I shall be glad to serve you.

*Sir Bash.* I am for ever obliged to you—here, here; take it now—here it is in bank-notes——one, two, three; there is three hundred—give her that, and tell her you have more at her service to-morrow, or next day, if her occasions require it.

*Love.* My good friend, to oblige you. [*Takes the money.*] This is the rarest adventure!

*Sir Bash.* I'll do any thing for you in return.

*Love.* I shall have occasion for your friendship——that is, to forgive me, if you find me out.

[*Aside.*

*Sir Bash.* Lose no time; step to her now——hold, hold; sir Brilliant is with her.

*Love.* I can dismiss him. Rely upon my friendship: I will make her ladyship easy for you.

*Sir Bash.* It will be kind of you.

*Love.* It shall be her own fault if I don't.

*Sir Bash.* A thousand thanks to you——well, is not this the rarest project?

*Love.* It is the newest way——of satisfying a man's wife!

*Sir Bash.* Ay! let this head of mine alone.

*Love.* [*Aside.*] Not, if I can help it. Hush!—I hear sir Brilliant; he is coming down stairs. I'll take this opportunity, and step to her ladyship now.

*Sir Bash.* Do so, do so.

*Love.* I am gone. [*Aside.*] Who can blame me now, if I cuckold this fellow? [*Exit.*

*Sir Bash.* Prosper you, prosper you, Mr Lovemore. Make me thankful! he is a true friend. I don't know what I should do without him.

*Enter* SIR BRILLIANT.

*Sir Bril.* Sir Bashful, how have you managed this?

*Sir Bash.* I have no art, no management. What's the matter?

*Sir Bril.* I don't know what you have done, but your lady laughs till she is ready to expire at what I have been telling her.

*Sir Bash.* And she thinks sir Amorous la Fool an object of ridicule?

*Sir Bril.* She does not give credit to a single syllable of the story. A man that loves his wife would be a Phœnix indeed! Such a thing might exist formerly, but, in this polished age, is no where to be found. That's her opinion of the matter.

*Sir Bash.* [*Laughs.*] A whimsical notion of hers! and so she thinks you may go about with a lanthorn to find a man that sets any value upon his wife?

*Sir Bril.* You have managed to convince her of it. How the devil do you contrive to govern so fine a woman? I know several, without her pretensions, who have long ago thrown off all restraint. You keep up your dignity.

*Sir Bash.* Yes, I know what I am about.

*Sir Bril.* You!—you are quite in the fashion.—Apropos; I fancy I shall want you to afford me your assistance. You know my lady Charlotte Modelove? She has a taste for the theatre: at Bell-Grove Place she has an elegant stage, where her select friends amuse themselves now and then with a representation of certain comic pieces. We shall there act the new comedy; but we apprehend some difficulty in the arrangement of the several characters. Now, you shall act sir Amorous, and——

*Sir Bash.* I act, sir!—I know nothing of the character.

*Sir Bril.* Po! say nothing of that. In time you may reach the ridiculous absurdity of it, and play it as well as another.

*Sir Bash.* [*Aside.*] Confusion! he does not suspect, I hope—divert yourselves, sir, as you may; but not at my expence I promise you.

*Sir Bril.* Never be so abrupt. Who knows but lady Constant may be the happy wife, the *Cara Sposa* of the piece! and then, you in love with her, and she laughing at you for it, will give a zest to the humour, which every body will relish in the most exquisite degree.

*Sir Bash.* Po! this is too much. You are very pleasant, but you won't easily get me to play the fool.

*Sir Bril.* Well, consider of it. I shall be delighted to see my friend sir Bashful tied to his wife's apronstring, and, with a languishing look, melting away in admiration of her charms. Oh, ho, ho, ho!—adieu; *a l'honneur;* good morning, sir Bashful. [*Exit.*

*Sir Bash.* I don't know what to make of all this. But there is no danger. As long as no body knows it, I may venture to love my wife. There will be no harm, while the secret is kept close as night, concealed, in tenfold darkness, from the wits and scoffers of the age.

*Enter* LOVEMORE.

Well, well;—how? what have you done?

*Love.* As I could wish: she is infinitely obliged to me, and will never forget the civility.

*Sir Bash.* A thousand thanks to you. I am not suspected?

*Love.* She has not a distant idea of you in this business. She was rather delicate at first, and hesitated, and thought it an indecorum to accept of money even from a friend. But that objection soon vanished. I told her, it is but too visible that she is unfortunately yoked with a husband, whose humour will never be softened down to the least compliance with her inclinations.

*Sir Bash.* That was well said, and had a good effect, I hope.

*Love.* I hope so, too.

*Sir Bash.* It helps to carry on the plot, you know.

*Love.* Admirably; it puts things in the train I wish.

*Sir Bash.* And so, to cover the design, you gave me the worst of characters?

*Love.* I painted you in terrible colours.

*Sir Bash.* Do so always, and she will never suspect me of being privy to any civility you may shew her.

*Love.* I would not have you know any thing of my civility to her for the world. [*Aside.*] I have succeeded thus far. I talked a few musty sentences, such as the person who receives a civility confers the obligation, with more jargon to that purpose; and so, with some reluctance she complied at last, and things are now upon the footing I would have them.—Death and fury! there comes my wife.

*Sir Bash.* Ay, and here comes my wife.

*Love.* What the devil brings her hither?

*Sir Bash.* [*Aside.*] Now, now; now let me see how he will carry it before Mrs Lovemore.—Walk in, madam! walk in, Mrs Lovemore.

*Enter* MRS LOVEMORE, *and* LADY CONSTANT, *at opposite doors.*

*Lady Con.* Mrs Lovemore, to see you abroad is a novelty indeed.

*Mrs Love.* As great, perhaps, as that of finding your ladyship at home. Mr Lovemore, I did not expect to have the pleasure of meeting you.

*Love.* Then we are both agreeably surprised.

*Sir Bash.* Now, mind how he behaves. [*Aside.*

*Mrs Love.* I thought you were gone to your city banker.

*Love.* And you find that you are mistaken. I have deferred it till the evening—[*Aside.*] 'Sdeath! to be teased in this manner.

*Sir Bash.* [*Aside.*] No, no; he won't drop the mask. [*Looks at* LADY CONSTANT.] She has touched the cash; I can see the bank-notes sparkling in her eyes.

*Mrs Love.* If you don't go into the city till the evening, may I hope for your company at dinner, Mr Lovemore?

*Love.* The question is entertaining; but, as it was settled this morning, I think it has lost the graces of novelty.

*Sir Bash.* He won't let her have the least suspicion of his regard. [*Aside.*

*Lady Con.* I dare say Mr Lovemore will dine at home, if it conduces to your happiness, madam; and sir Bashful, I take it, will dine at home, for the contrary reason.

*Sir Bash.* Madam, I will dine at home, or I will dine abroad, for what reason I please; and it is my pleasure to give no reason for either.—Lovemore! [*Looks at him, and smiles.*

*Love.* [*Aside to* SIR BASHFUL.] Bravo!—What a blockhead it is!

*Mrs Love.* As you have your chariot at the door, Mr Lovemore, if you have no objection, I will send away my chair, and you may do me the honour of a place in your carriage.

*Love.* The honour will be very great to me; but——so many places to call at.——If I had known this sooner——You had better keep your chair.

*Sir Bash.* [*Aside.*] Cunning! cunning! he would not be seen in his chariot with her for the world. He has more discretion than I have.

*Lady Con.* Mrs Lovemore, since you have, at last, ventured to come abroad, I hope you will think it a change for the better. You are too domestic. I shall expect now to see you often: and apropos, I am to have a route to morrow evening; if you will do me the honour of your company——

*Sir Bash.* A route to-morrow evening! you have a route every evening, I think. Learn of Mrs Lovemore; imitate her example, and don't let me have your hurricane months all the year round in my house.—Hip! [*Aside.*] Lovemore, how do you like me?

*Love.* [*Aside to* SIR BASHFUL.] You improve upon it every time. But I am loitering here, as if I had nothing to do.—My lady Constant, I have the honour to wish your ladyship a good morning. Sir Bashful, yours—madam.

[*Bows gravely to* MRS LOVEMORE, *hums a tune, and exit.*

*Sir Bash.* [*Aside.*] He knows how to play the game. I'll try what I can do. Mrs Lovemore, I have the honour to wish you a good morning. Madam—

[*Bows gravely to* LADY CONSTANT, *hums a tune, and exit.*

*Mrs Love.* Two such husbands!

*Lady Con.* As to my swain, I grant you: Mr

Lovemore is, at least, well-bred; he has an understanding, and may, in time, reflect. Sir Bashful never qualifies himself with the smallest tincture of civility.

*Mrs Love.* If civility can qualify the draught, I must allow Mr Lovemore to have a skilful hand. But there is no end to his projects.—— Every day opens a new scene. Another of his intrigues is come to light. I came to consult with your ladyship. I know you are acquainted with the widow Bellmour.

*Lady Con.* The widow Bellmour! I know her perfectly well.

*Mrs Love.* Not so well, perhaps, as you may imagine. She has thrown out the lure for my wild gallant, and in order to deceive me——

*Lady Con.* My dear, you must be mistaken.— Who tells you this?

*Mrs Love.* Oh, I can trust to my intelligence. Sir Brilliant Fashion, by way of blind to me, has been this morning drawing so amiable a picture of the lady——

*Lady Con.* Sir Brilliant's authority is not always the best; but, in this point, you may trust him.

*Mrs Love.* But when you have heard all the circumstances——

*Lady Con.* Depend upon it, you are wrong.— I know the widow Bellmour. Her turn of character, and way of thinking——

*Mrs Love.* Excuse me, madam. You decide without hearing me.

*Lady Con.* All scandal, take my word for it. However, let me hear your story. We'll adjourn to my dressing-room, if you will; and I promise to confute all you can say. I would have you know the widow Bellmour: you will be in love with her. My dear madam, have not you a tinge of jealousy? Beware of that malady. If you see things through that medium, I shall give you up.

That jaundice of the mind, whose colours strike
On friend and foe, and paint them all alike.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT III.

SCENE I.—*An apartment at the* WIDOW BELLMOUR'S: *several chairs, a toilette, a book-case, and a harpsichord, disposed up and down.*

MIGNIONET. *Putting things in order.*

*Mig.* I DON'T well know what to make of this same lord Etheridge. He is coming here again to-day, I suppose: all this neatness, and all this care, must be for him. Well, it does not signify: —[*Arranging the chairs.*]—there is a pleasure in obeying Madam Bellmour. She is a sweet lady, that's the truth of it. 'Twere a pity if any of these men, with their deceitful arts, should draw her into a snare. But she knows them all. They must rise early who can outwit her.—[*Settling the toilette.*]

*Enter* MRS BELLMOUR, *reading.*

'Oh! blest with temper, whose unclouded ray
'Can make to-morrow cheerful as to-day!
'She, who can own a sister's charms, and hear
'Sighs for a daughter with unwounded ear;
'That never answers till a husband cools,
'And, if she rules him, never shews she rules.'

Sensible, elegant Pope!

'Charms by accepting, by submitting sways,
'Yet has her humour most, when she obeys.'

[*Seems to read on.*

*Mig.* Lord love my mistress! Always so charming, so gay, and so happy!

*Mrs Bell.* These exquisite characters of women! They are a sort of painter's gallery, where one sees the portraits of all one's acquaintance, and sometimes we see our own features, too.— Mignionet, put this book in its place.

*Mig.* Yes, madam; and there's your toilette looks as elegant as hands can make it.

*Mrs Bell.* Does it? I think it does. You have some taste. Apropos, where is my new song? Oh! here it is! I must make myself mistress of it.—[*Plays upon the harpsichord, and sings a little.*]—I believe I have conquered it.—[*Rises, and goes to her toilette.*]—This hair is always tormenting me, always in disorder: this lock must be for ever gadding out of its place. I must, and will, subdue it. Do you know, Mignionet, that this is a pretty song? It was writ by my lord Etheridge. My lord has a turn—[*Sings a little.*] —I must be perfect before he comes.—[*Hums the tune.*]—Do you know that I think my lord is one of those men who may be endured?

*Mig.* Yes, madam; I know you think so.

*Mrs Bell.* Do you?

*Mig.* And if I have any skill, madam, you are not without a little partiality for his lordship.

*Mrs Bell.* Really? Then you think I like him, perhaps? Do you think I like him? I don't well know how that is. Like him? No, not absolutely: it is not decided: and yet I don't know, if I had a mind to humour myself, and to give way a little to inclination, there is something here in my heart that would be busy, I believe. The man has a softness of manner, a turn of wit, and does not want sentiment. Can I call it sentiment? Yes; I think I may. He has sentiment; and then he knows the manners, the usage of the world, and he points out the ridicule of things with so much humour!—

*Mig.* You'll be caught, madam, I see that. To be sure, my lord has a quality air, and can make himself agreeable. But what of that?

You know but very little of him. Is a man's character known in three or four weeks time? [MRS BELLMOUR *hums a tune.*]—Do, my dear madam, mind what I say: I am at times very considerate. I make my remarks, and I see very plainly—Lord, madam, what am I doing? I am talking to you for your own good, and you are all in the air, and no more mind me—no, no more than if I was nothing at all.

*Mrs Bell.* [*Continues humming a tune.*]—You talk wonderfully well upon the subject; but, as I know how the cards lie, and can play the best of the game; and as I have a song to amuse me, one is inclined to give musical nonsense the preference.

*Mig.* I assure you, madam, I am not one of those servants, that bargain for their mistress's inclinations: but you are going to take a leap in the dark. What does my lord Etheridge mean, with his chair always brought into the hall, and the curtains close about his ears? Why does not he come like himself, and not care who sees him? There's some mystery at the bottom, I'll be sworn there is; and so you'll find at last. Dear heart, madam, if you are determined not to listen, what signifies my living with you? At this rate, I am of no service to you.

*Mrs Bell.* There; I have conquered my song.—[*Runs to her glass.*]—How do I look to-day? The eyes do well enough, I think. And so, Mignionet, you imagine I shall play the fool, and marry my lord Etheridge?

*Mig.* You have it through the very heart of you: I see that.

*Mrs Bell.* Do you? I don't know what to say to it. Poor sir Brilliant Fashion! If I prefer his rival, what will become of him? I won't think about it.

*Enter* POMPEY.

*Mrs Bell.* What's the matter, Pompey?

*Pom.* A lady in a chair desires to know if your ladyship is at home.

*Mrs Bell.* Has the lady no name?

*Pom.* Yes; I fancy she has, madam; but she did not tell it.

*Mrs Bell.* How awkward! Well, shew the lady up stairs.

*Mig.* Had not you better receive her in the drawing-room, madam? I have not half done my business here?

*Mrs Bell.* Oh! You have done very well.—There will be less formality here. I dare say it is some intimate acquaintance, though that foolish boy does not recollect her name. Here she comes. I don't know her.

*Enter* MRS LOVEMORE.

*Mrs Love.* [*Disconcerted.*]—I beg pardon for this intrusion.

*Mrs Bell.* Pray walk in, madam. Mignionet, reach a chair.—[MRS LOVEMORE *crosses the stage, and they salute each other with an air of distant civility.*]

*Mrs Love.* I am afraid this visit from one who has not the honour of knowing you——

*Mrs Bell.* Oh, make no apology, madam.—Mignionet, you may withdraw.

[*Exit* MIGNIONET.

*Mrs Love.* It may appear extraordinary, that a stranger thus intrudes upon you; but a particular circumstance determined me to take this liberty. I hope you will excuse the freedom?

*Mrs Bell.* You do me honour, madam: pray, no excuses. A particular circumstance, you say?

*Mrs Love.* I shall appear, perhaps, very ridiculous, and, indeed, I am afraid I have done the most absurd thing! but a lady of your acquaintance——You know my lady Constant, madam?

*Mrs Bell.* Extremely well.

*Mrs Love.* She has given you such an amiable character for benevolence, and a certain elegant way of thinking, entirely your own, that I flatter myself, if it is in your power, you will be generous enough to afford me your assistance.

*Mrs Bell.* Lady Constant is very obliging.—Make a trial of me, madam, and if I can be of any use———

*Mrs Love.* I fear I shall ask you a strange question:—are you acquainted with a gentleman of the name of Lovemore?

*Mrs Bell.* Lovemore? No such name on my list. Lovemore? No: I recollect no such person. The circle of my acquaintance is small: I am almost a stranger in town.

*Mrs Love.* That makes an end, madam. I beg your pardon. I have given you an unnecessary trouble. [*Going.*

*Mrs Bell.* [*Aside.*]—Mighty odd this! Her manner is interesting. You have given me no trouble; but my curiosity is excited.—[*Takes her by the hand.*]—I beg you will keep your chair.—Pray be seated. What can this mean?—[*Aside.*]—Will you be so good as to inform me who the gentleman is?

*Mrs Love.* The story will be uninteresting to you, and, to me, it is painful. My grievances—[*Puts her handkerchief to her eyes.*]

*Mrs Bell.* [*Aside.*]—Her grief affects me.—[*Looks at her till she has recovered herself.*]—I would not importune too much——

*Mrs Love.* You have such an air of frankness and generosity, that I will open myself without reserve. I have the tenderest regard for Mr Lovemore: I have been married to him these two years. I admired his understanding, his sensibility, and his spirit. My heart was his; I loved him with unbounded passion. I thought the flame was mutual, and you may believe I was happy. But, of late, there is such a revolution in his temper! I know not what to make of it. I am doomed to be unhappy.

*Mrs Bell.* Perhaps not: you may still have much in your power.

*Mrs Love.* My power is at an end. Instead of the looks of affection, and the expressions of tenderness, with which he used to meet me, it is nothing now but cold, averted, superficial civility; while abroad, he runs on in a wild career of pleasure, and, to my deep affliction, has attached himself entirely to another object.

*Mrs Bell.* And if I had known Mr Lovemore, do you imagine that my advice or persuasion would avail you any thing?

*Mrs Love.* I had such a fancy. [*Aside.*] What can I think of her!

*Mrs Bell.* You are much mistaken. In these cases, friends may interpose; but what can they do? They recommend a wife to the good will, the honour, and generosity of her husband. But when a woman, who should be esteemed and loved, is recommended as an object of compassion, she is humbled indeed: it is all over with her. A wife should recommend herself by the graces of her person, and the variety of her talents. Men will prove false; and, if there is nothing in your complaint, but mere gallantry on his side, I protest, I do not see that your case is so very bad.

*Mrs Love.* Can it be worse, ma'am?

*Mrs Bell.* A great deal. If his affections, instead of being alienated, had been extinguished, what would be the consequence?—A downright, sullen, habitual insensibility. From that lethargy of affection, a man is not easily recalled. In all Love's bill of mortality, there is not a more fatal disorder. But this is not the case with Mr Lovemore: by your account, he still has sentiment; and, where there is sentiment, there is room to hope for an alteration. But where the heart has lost its feeling, you have the pain of finding yourself neglected; and for what? The man has grown stupid, and, to the warm beams of wit and beauty, as impenetrable as an ice-house.

*Mrs Love.* That is not my complaint. I have to do with one, who is too susceptible of impressions from every beautiful object that comes in his way.

*Mrs Bell.* Why, so much the better. A new idea strikes his fancy. He is inconstant; but, after wavering and fluttering, he may settle at last.

*Mrs Love.* How light she makes of it! she apologizes for him! [*Aside.*

*Mrs Bell.* And, perhaps, the fault is on the woman's side—

*Mrs Love.* The virtue of my conduct, madam——

*Mrs Bell.* Oh! I would have laid my life you would be at that work. But virtue is not the question at present. I suppose virtue; that is always understood. The fault I mean, is the want of due attention to the art of pleasing. It is there that most women fail. In these times, virtue may be its own reward. Virtue alone cannot please the taste of the age. It is *la belle nature*, virtue embellished by the advantages of art, that men expect now-a-days. That is the whole affair: I would not make myself uneasy, ma'am.

*Mrs Love.* Not uneasy, when his indifference does not diminish my regard for him! Not uneasy, when the man I dote upon, no longer fixes his happiness at home!

*Mrs Bell.* Give me leave to speak my mind freely. I have observed, when the fiend jealousy is roused, that women lay out a wonderful deal of anxiety and vexation to no account; when, perhaps, if the truth were known, they should be angry with themselves instead of their husbands.

*Mrs Love.* Angry with myself, madam! Calumny can lay nothing to my charge.

*Mrs Bell.* There again, now! that is the folly of us all.

*Mrs Love.* And after being married so long, and behaving all the time with such an equality!

*Mrs Bell.* Ay, that equality is the rock so many split upon. The men will change. Excuse my freedom. They are so immersed in luxury, that they must have eternal variety in their happiness.

*Mrs Love.* She justifies him! [*Aside.*

*Mrs Bell.* Your case may not be desperate: I would venture to lay a pot of coffee, that the person, who now rivals you in your husband's affections, does it without your good qualities, and even without your beauty, by the mere force of agreeable talents, and some skill in the art of pleasing.

*Mrs Love.* I am afraid that compliment——

*Mrs Bell.* If I judge right, you are entitled to it. Let me ask you: Do you know this formidable rival?

*Mrs Love.* There, I own, I am puzzled.

*Mrs Bell.* What sort of woman is she?

*Mrs Love.* Formidable indeed! She has been described to me as one of charming and rare accomplishments.

*Mrs Bell.* Never throw up the cards for all that. Take my advice, ma'am. You seem to have qualities that may dispute your husband's heart with any body; but the exertion of those amiable qualities, I fear, may be suppressed. Excuse my frankness. You should counteract your rival by the very arts which she employs against you. I know a lady now in your very situation: and what does she do? She consumes herself with unceasing jealousy; whereas, if she would exert but half the pains she uses in teasing herself, to vie with the person who has won her husband from her; to vie with her, I say, in the art of pleasing—for there it is a woman's pride should be piqued—Would she do that, take my word for it, victory would declare in her favour. You are not without attractions; give them their energy, and you conquer.

*Mrs Love.* Do you think so, ma'am?

*Mrs Bell.* Think so! I am sure of it. You

must exert yourself. It is the wife's business to bait the hook for her husband with variety. Virtue alone, by her own native charms, would do, if the men were perfect. But it is otherwise; and, since vice can assume allurements, why should not truth and innocence have additional ornaments also?

*Mrs Love.* I find sir Brilliant told me truth. [*Aside.*

*Mrs Bell.* Give me leave, ma'am: I have been married, and am a little in the secret. To win a heart is easy; to keep it is the difficulty. After the fatal words 'for better, for worse,' women relax into indolence, and, while they are guilty of no infidelity, they think every thing safe. But they are mistaken: a great deal is wanting; an address, a vivacity, a desire to please; the agreeable contrast; the sense that pleases, the folly that charms—A favourite poet, Prior, has expressed it with delicacy.

'Above the fixed and settled rules
'Of vice and virtue in the schools,
'The better part should set before 'em
'A grace, a manner, a decorum.'

*Mrs Love.* But when the natural temper——

*Mrs Bell.* Oh! the natural temper must be forced. Home must be made a place of pleasure to the husband. How is that to be done? That equality, which you talk of, is a sameness that palls and wearies. A wife should throw infinite variety into her manner. She should, as it were, multiply herself, and be, as it were, sundry different women, on different occasions. The tender, the affectionate, the witty, the silent, all in their turns, all shifting the scene, and she succeeding to herself as quick as lightning. And this I take to be the whole mystery; the way to keep a man. But I beg your pardon. I go on too fast: you will think me the giddiest creature.

*Mrs Love.* Quite the reverse, ma'am; you are very obliging!

*Mrs Bell.* I have tired myself and you, too.—But pray, may I now inquire, who was so kind as to intimate that I am acquainted with Mr Lovemore?

*Mrs Love.* It was a mere mistake. I have given you a great deal of trouble. You will excuse my frankness: I had heard that his visits were frequent here.

*Mrs Bell.* His visits frequent here! My lady Constant could not tell you so?

*Mrs Love.* She told me quite the contrary. She knows your amiable qualities, and does you justice.

*Mrs Bell.* The accident is lucky! it has procured me the honour of your acquaintance. And I suppose you imagined that I had robbed you of Mr Lovemore's heart?—Scandal will be buzzing about. I can laugh at every thing of that sort. [*A rap at the door.*] Oh! Heavens! some troublesome visit. [*Rings a bell.*

*Enter* MIGNIONET.

*Mrs Bell.* I am not at home. Go, and give an answer.

*Mig.* It is lord Etheridge, ma'am: he is coming up stairs. The servants did not know you had changed your mind.

*Mrs Bell.* Was ever any thing so cross? Tell his lordship I have company; I am busy; I am not well; any thing; don't let him come in. Make haste, dispatch: I won't see him.

*Mrs Love.* I beg I may not hinder you: I shall take my leave.

*Mrs Bell.* By no means. Our conversation grows interesting. I positively will not see my lord.

*Mrs Love.* I can't agree to that. You must see his lordship. I can step into another room.

*Mrs Bell.* Will you be so good? You will find something to amuse you in that cabinet. [*Points to a door in the back scene.*] We must talk farther. My lord shan't stay long.

*Mrs Love.* Nay, but if you stand upon ceremony—

*Mrs Bell.* Very well: I'll contrive it. This is a lover of mine. A lover and a husband are the same thing. Perhaps it will divert you to hear how I manage him. I hear him on the stairs. Make haste: Mignionet, shew the way.

[MRS LOVE. *and* MIG. *go out at the back scene.*

*Mrs Bell.* Let me see how I look to receive him. [*Runs to her glass.*

*Enter* LOVEMORE, *with a star and garter, as* LORD ETHERIDGE.

*Love.* A heavenly image in the glass appears,
To that she bends, to that her eyes she rears,
Repairs her smiles———

*Mrs Bell.* Repairs her smiles, my lord! You are satirical this morning. Pray, my lord, are my features out of repair, like an old house in the country, that wants a tenant?

*Love.* Nay, now, you wrest my words from their visible intention. You can't suppose that I impute to such perfect beauty the least want of repair, whatever may be the case, ma'am, with regard to the want of a tenant?

*Mrs Bell.* Oh! then your opinion is, that I want a tenant? And perhaps you think I am going to put up a bill to signify to all passers-by, that here is a mansion to be let, inquire of the widow Bellmour? I like your notion; I don't think it would be a bad scheme. Shall I try it?

*Love.* A palace needs no such invitation. Its natural beauty attracts admiring eyes. But who can bid up to the price? The person who is able to do it———

*Mrs Bell.* Will be happy; I know that is what you are going to say. But he must do homage for it: and then I will let it to none but a single gentleman. Do you know any body whom these conditions will suit?

*Love.* Those conditions, ma'am——[*Aside.*] What the devil does she mean? I am not detected, I hope?—To be sure, ma'am, those conditions—And—none but single gentlemen will presume to———

*Mrs Bell.* And then it must be a lease for life. But that will never do; nobody will be troubled with it. I shall never get it off my hands; do you think I shall, my lord?

*Love.* There must be very little taste left, if you have not a number of bidders. You know the ambition of my heart; you know I am devoted to you, upon any terms, even though it were to be bought with life.

*Mrs Bell.* Heavens! what a dying swain you are! And does your lordship mean to be guilty of matrimony? Lord! what a question have I asked! To be sure, I am the giddiest creature. My lord, don't you think me a strange madcap?

*Love.* A vein of wit, like yours, that springs at once from vivacity and sentiment, serves to exalt your beauty, and give animation to every charm.

*Mrs Bel.* Upon my word, you have said it finely! But you are in the right, my lord. Your pensive melancholy beauty is the most insipid thing in nature. And yet, we often see features without a mind; and the owner of them sits in the room with you, like a mere vegetable, for an hour together, till, at last, she is incited to the violent exertion of, 'Yes, sir'——'I fancy not, 'ma'am,' and then a matter of fact conversation! 'Miss Beverly is going to be married to Captain 'Shoulder-knot—My lord Mortgage has had an- 'other tumble at hazard—Sir Harry Wilding has 'lost his election——They say short aprons are 'coming into fashion.'

*Love.* Oh! a matter of fact conversation is insupportable.

*Mrs Bel.* But you meet with nothing else. All in great spirits about nothing, and not an idea among them. Go to Ranelagh, or to what public place you will, it is just the same. A lady comes up to you;—'How charmingly you look! '—But, my dear m'em, did you hear what hap- 'pened to us the other night? We were going 'home from the opera—you know my aunt Roly- 'Poly? it was her coach. There was she and 'lady Betty Fidget—What a sweet blonde! How 'do you do, my dear? [*Curtsying as to another 'going by.*] My lady Betty is quite recovered; 'we were all frightened about her; but doctor 'Snake-root was called in; no, not doctor Snake- 'root, Doctor Bolus; and so he altered the 'course of the medicines, and so my lady Betty 'is purely now.—Well, there was she, and my 'aunt, and sir George Bragwell—a pretty man 'sir George!—finest teeth in the world!—Your 'ladyship's most obedient—[*Curtsying.*] We ex- 'pected you last night, but you did not come.— 'He, he, he!—and so there was sir George and 'the rest of us; and so, turning the corner of 'Bond-street, the brute of a coachman—I hum- 'bly thank your grace [*Curtsies.*]——the brute 'of a coachman overturned us, and so my aunt 'Roly-Poly was frightened out of her wits; and 'lady Betty has had her nerves again. Only 'think! such accidents!—I am glad to see you 'look so well; *a l' honneur;*' he, he, he!

*Love.* Ho, ho! you paint to the life. I see her moving before me in all her airs.

*Mrs Bel.* With this conversation their whole stock is exhausted, and away they run to cards. Quadrille has murdered wit!

*Love.* Ay, and beauty, too. Cards are the worst enemies to a complexion: the small pox is not so bad. The passions throw themselves into every feature: I have seen the countenance of an angel changed, in a moment, to absolute deformity: the little loves and graces that sparkled in the eye, bloomed in the cheek, and smiled about the mouth, all wing their flight, and leave the face, which they before adorned, a prey to grief, to anger, malice, and fury, and the whole train of fretful passions.

*Mrs Bel.* And the language of the passions is sometimes heard upon those occasions.

*Love.* Very true, madam; and if, by chance, they do bridle and hold in a little, the struggle they undergo is the most ridiculous sight in nature. I have seen a huge oath quivering on the pale lip of a reigning toast for half an hour together, and an uplifted eye accusing the gods for the loss of an odd trick. And then, at last, the whole room in a babel of sounds. 'My lord, you 'flung away the game.—Sir George, why did not 'you rough the spade?—Captain Hazard, why 'did not you lead through the honours?—Madam, 'it was not the play—Pardon me, sir—but madam '—but sir—I would not play with you for straws; 'don't you know what Hoyle says?——If A and 'B are partners against C and D, and the game 'nine all, A and B have won three tricks, and 'C and D four tricks: C leads his suit, D puts 'up the king, then returns the suit; A passes, 'C puts up the queen, and B trumps it;' and so A and B, and C and D are bandied about; they attack, they defend, and all is jargon and confusion, wrangling, noise, and nonsense; and high life, and polite conversation.———Ha! ha! ha!

*Mrs Bel.* Ha! ha! the pencil of Hogarth could not do it better. And yet one is dragged to these places. One must play sometimes. We must let our friends pick our pockets now and then, or they drop our acquaintance. Do you ever play, my lord?

*Love.* Play, ma'am?——[*Aside.*] What does she mean? I must play the hypocrite to the end of the chapter.——Play?—Now and then, as you say, one must, to oblige, and from necessity;

but from taste, or inclination, no; I never touch a card.

*Mrs Bel.* Oh! very true; I forgot. You dedicate your time to the Muses; a downright rhyming peer. Do you know, my lord, that I am charmed with your song?

*Love.* Are you?

*Mrs Bel.* Absolutely; and I really think you would make an admirable Vauxhall poet.

*Love.* Nay, now you flatter me.

*Mrs Bel.* No, as I live; it is very pretty. And do you know that I can sing it already? Come, you shall hear how I murder it. I have no voice to-day, but you shall hear me. [*Sings.*

*Attend, all ye fair, and I'll tell you the art,*
*To bind every fancy with ease in your chains;*
*To hold in soft fetters the conjugal heart,*
*And banish from Hymen his doubts and his pains.*

*When Juno was decked with the cestus of Love,*
*At first she was handsome; she charming became:*
*With skill the soft passions it taught her to move,*
*To kindle at once, and to keep up the flame.*

*'Tis this gives the eyes all their magic and fire,*
*The voice-melting accents; impassions the kiss;*
*Confers the sweet smile, that awakens desire,*
*And plants round the fair each incentive to bliss.*

*Thence flows the gay chat, more than reason that charms;*
*The eloquent blush, that can beauty improve;*
*The fond sigh, the fond vow, the soft touch that alarms;*
*The tender disdain, the renewal of love.*

*Ye fair, take the cestus, and practise its power:*
*The mind unaccomplished, mere features are vain;*
*With wit, with good humour, enliven each hour,*
*And the loves, and the graces, shall walk in your train.*

*Love.* My poetry is infinitely obliged to you. It grows into sense as you sing it. Your voice, like the cestus of Venus, bestows a grace upon every thing.

*Mrs Bel.* Oh! fulsome; I sing horridly. [*Goes to the glass.*] How do I look?—Don't tell me, my lord: you are studying a compliment, but I am resolved to mortify you; I won't hear it.—— Well! have you thought of any thing? Let it pass; 'tis too late now. Pray, my lord, how came you to choose so grave a subject as connubial happiness?

*Love.* Close and particular that question! [*Aside.*

*Mrs Bel.* Juno! Hymen! doubts and pains! one would almost swear that you have a wife at home who sat for the picture.

*Love.* Madam, the—[*Embarrassed.*] The compliment—you are only laughing at me—the subject, from every day's experience—[*Aside.*] Does she suspect me?—the subject is common—Bachelor's wives, you know—ha! ha!—And when you inspire the thought; when you are the bright original, it is no wonder that the copy—

*Mrs Bel.* Horrid! going to harp on the old string. Odious solicitations! I hate all proposals. I am not in the humour. You must release me now: your visit is rather long. I have indulged you a great while. And, besides, were I to listen to your vows, what would become of poor sir Brilliant Fashion?

*Love.* Sir Brilliant Fashion?

*Mrs Bel.* Do you know him?

*Love.* I know whom you mean. I have seen him; but that's all. He lives with a strange set, and does not move in my sphere. If he is a friend of yours, I have no more to say.

*Mrs Bel.* Is there any thing to say against him?

*Love.* Nay, I have no knowledge of the gentleman. They who know him best, don't rate him high. A sort of current coin that passes in this town. You will do well to beware of counterfeits.

*Mrs Bel.* But this is very alarming——

*Enter* MIGNIONET, *in a violent hurry.*

*Mign.* My dear madam, I am frighted out of my senses. The poor lady——Where are the hartshorn drops?

*Love.* The lady! what lady?

*Mign.* Never stand asking what lady. She has fainted away all on a sudden: she is now in strong hysterics; give me the drops.

*Mrs Bel.* I must run to her assistance. Adieu, my lord. I shall be at home in the evening. Mignionet, step this way. Your lordship will excuse me: I shall expect to see you. Come, Mignionet; make haste, make haste.

[*Exit with* MIGNIONET.

*Love.* I hope the lady has not overheard me? What a villain am I to carry on this scheme against so much beauty, innocence, and merit! And to wear this badge of honour for the darkest purposes! And, then, my friend, sir Brilliant, will it be fair to supplant him? Prithee, be quiet, my dear conscience! none of your meddling!—don't interrupt a gentleman in his pleasures.—Don't you know, my good friend, that love has no respect for persons, but soars above all laws of honour and of friendship? No reflection; have her I must, and that quickly, too, or she will discover all. Besides, this is my wife's fault: why does she not make home agreeable? I am willing to be happy; I could be constant to her, but she is not formed for happiness.——

What the devil is Madam Fortune about now? [*Sir* BRILLIANT *sings within.*] Sir Brilliant, by all that's infamous! Confusion! no place to hide me? no escape! The door is locked. Mignionet, Mignionet, open the door.

*Mig.* [*Within.*] You must not come in here.

*Love.* What shall I do? This star, and this ribbon will bring me to disgrace. Away with this tell-tale evidence! [*Takes off the ribbon.*]—Go, thou blushing devil, and hide thyself for ever. [*Puts it in his pocket.*

*Enter* SIR BRILLIANT, *singing.*

*Sir Bril.* Mrs Bellmour, I have such a story for you. How! Lovemore?

*Love.* Your slave, sir Brilliant; your slave. [*Hiding the star with his hat.*

*Sir Bril.* I did not think you had been acquainted here.

*Love.* You are right. I came in quest of you. I saw the lady. I was drawn hither by mere curiosity. We have had some conversation; and I made it subservient to your purposes. I have been giving a great character of you.

*Sir Bril.* You are always at the service of your friends. But what's the matter? what are you fumbling about? [*Pulls the hat.*

*Love.* 'Sdeath! have a care: don't touch me. [*Puts his handkerchief to his breast.*

*Sir Bril.* What the devil is the matter?

*Love.* Oh! keep off—[*Aside.*] Here's a business. Taken in the old way: let me pass——I have had a fling at lord Etheridge: he will be out of favour with the widow: I have done you that good. Racks and torments, my old complaint! [*Wanting to pass him.*

*Sir Bril* What complaint? You had better sit down.

*Love.* No, no; air, the air. I must have a surgeon. A stroke of a tennis-ball! My lord Rackett's unlucky left-hand. Let me pass.—There is something forming here. [*Passes him.*] To be caught is the devil. [*Aside.*] Don't mention my name. You will counteract all I have said. Oh! torture, torture! I will explain to you another time. Sir Brilliant, yours. I have served your interest—Oh! there is certainly something forming. [*Exit.*

*Sir Bril.* What does all this mean? So, so, Mrs Lovemore's suspicions are well-founded.—The widow has her private visits, I see. Yes, yes; there is something forming here.

*Enter* MRS BELLMOUR.

So; here she comes. The whole shall be explained. I hope, madam, that I don't interrupt you with any piquet-friend.

*Mrs Bell.* You are always a torment: what brings you hither?

*Sir Bril.* There are times, madam, when a visit———

*Mrs Bel.* Is unseasonable, and yours is so now. How can you tease me?

*Sir Bril.* I thought as much. There are some things that may require to be discussed between us.

*Mrs Bel.* Reserve them all for another time: I can't hear you now. You must leave me.—There is a lady taken ill in the next room.

*Sir Bril.* And here has been a gentleman taken ill in this room.

*Mrs Bell.* How troublesome! you must be gone. Do you dispute my will and pleasure? Fly this moment!

*Sir Bril.* But, madam—Nay, if you insist upon it—— [*Goes.*

*Mrs Bell.* But, sir! I will be absolute: you must leave me. [*Puts him out.*] There, and now I'll make sure of the door.

*Enter* MRS LOVEMORE, *leaning on* MIGNIONET.

*Mign.* This way, madam: here is more air in this room.

*Mrs Bell.* How do you find yourself? Pray, sit down.

*Mrs Love.* My spirits were too weak. I could not support it any longer; such a scene of perfidy!

*Mrs Bell.* You astonish me! what perfidy?

*Mrs Love.* Perfidy of the blackest dye; I told you that you were acquainted with my husband?

*Mrs Bel.* Acquainted with your husband! [*Angrily.*

*Mrs Love.* A moment's patience—Yes, madam, you are acquainted with him. The base man, who went hence but now——

*Mrs Bell.* Sir Brilliant Fashion?

*Mrs Love.* No; your lord Etheridge, as he calls himself——

*Mrs Bell.* Lord Etheridge? What of him, pray?

*Mrs Love.* False, dissembling man! he is my husband, madam: not lord Etheridge, but plain Mr Lovemore; my Mr Lovemore.

*Mrs Bel.* And has he been base enough to assume a title to ensnare me to my undoing?

*Mign.* [*Going.*] Well, for certain, I believe the devil's in me: I always thought him a sly one. [*Exit.*

*Mrs Love.* To see him carrying on this dark design—to see the man whom I have ever esteemed and loved—the man whom I must still love—esteem him, I fear, I never can—to see him before my face with that artful treachery! it was too much for sensibility like mine; I felt the shock too severely, and I sunk under it.

*Mrs Bel.* I am ready to sink this moment with amazement! I saw him, for the first time, at old Mrs Loveit's. She introduced him to me. The appointment was of her own making.

*Mrs Love.* You know Mrs Loveit's character, I suppose?

*Mrs Bell.* The practised veteran! Could I

suspect that a woman, in her style of life, would lend herself to a vile stratagem against my honour? That she would join in a conspiracy against her own sex? Mr Lovemore shall never enter these doors again——I am obliged to you, madam, for this visit; to me a providential incident. I am sorry for your share in it. The discovery secures my peace and happiness; to you it is a fatal conviction, a proof unanswerable against the person to whom you are joined for life.

*Mrs Love.* After this discovery, it cannot be for life. I am resolved not to pass another day under his roof.

*Mrs Bell.* Hold, hold! no sudden resolutions. Consider a little: passion is a bad adviser.—This may take a turn for your advantage.

*Mrs Love.* That can never be: I am lost beyond redemption.

*Mrs Bell* Don't decide too rashly. Come, come, the man, who has certain qualities, is worth thinking about, before one throws the hideous thing away for ever. Mr Lovemore is a traitor; but is not he still amiable? And, besides, you have heard his sentiments. That song points at something. Perhaps, you are a little to blame. He did not write upon such a subject, without a cause to suggest it. We will talk over this matter coolly. You have saved me, and I must return the obligation. You shall stay dinner with me.

*Mrs Love.* Excuse me. Mr Lovemore may possibly go home. He shall hear of his guilt, while the sense of it pierces here, and wounds me to the quick.

*Mrs Bell.* Now, there you are wrong: take my advice first. I will lay such a plan as may ensure him yours for ever. Come, come, you must not leave me yet. [*Takes her hand.*] Answer me one question: don't you still think he has qualities that do, in some sort, apologize for his vices?

*Mrs Love.* I don't know what to think of it: I hope he has.

*Mrs Bell.* Very well, then. I have lost a lover; you may gain one. Your conduct upon this occasion may reform him; and let me tell you, that the man, who has it in his power to atone for his faults, should not be entirely despised. Let the wife exert herself; let her try her powers of pleasing, and, take my word for it,

The wild gallant no more abroad will roam,
But find his loved variety at home.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*An apartment in* LOVEMORE'S *house.* MR *and* MRS LOVEMORE *at table after dinner: servants taking things out of the room.*

*Love.* [*Filling a glass.*] I wonder you are not tired of the same eternal topic. [*Sipping his wine.*

*Mrs Love.* If I make it an eternal topic, it is for your own good, Mr Lovemore.

*Love.* I know I have your good wishes, and you have mine. All our absent friends, Mrs Lovemore. [*Drinks.*

*Mrs Love.* If you would but wish well to yourself, sir, I should be happy.——But, in the way you go on, your health must be ruined; day is night, and night day; your substance squandered; your constitution destroyed; and your family quite neglected.

*Love.* Family neglected! You see I dined at home, and this is my reward for it.

*Mrs Love.* You dined at home, sir, because something abroad has disconcerted you. You went, I suppose, after I saw you at Lady Constant's, to your old haunt, your friend, Mrs Loveit——

*Love.* Mrs Loveit! ha! ha! I dropt her acquaintance long ago. No, my love, I drove into the city, and spent the rest of the morning upon business. I had long accounts to settle with old Discount, the banker.

*Mrs Love.* And that, to be sure, engrossed all your time. Business must be minded. Did you find him at home?

*Love.* It was by his own appointment. I went to his house directly after I parted from you. I have been no where else. Matters of account always fatigue me.

*Mrs Love.* I would not be too inquisitive, sir.

*Love.* Oh, no; you never are. I staid at the banker's the rest of the time; and I came straight from his house to have the pleasure of dining with you.

[*Fills a glass of wine.*

*Mrs Love.* Were there any sincerity in that declaration, I should be happy. A tavern life has hitherto been your delight. I wonder what delight you can find in such an eternal round of gaming, riot, and dissipation. Will you answer me one question?

*Love.* With great pleasure—[*Aside.*]—if it is not inconvenient.

*Mrs Love.* Lay your hand on your heart, and tell me——Have I deserved this usage?

*Love.* My humble service to you, my love. [*Drinks.*

*Mrs Love.* I am sure I have never been deficient in any one point of the duty I owe you. You won my heart, and I gave it freely.

*Love.* [*going to sleep.*] It is very true.

*Mrs Love.* Your interest has been mine. I

have known no pleasure unconnected with your happiness. Diversions, show, and pomp, have had no allurements for me.

*Love.* [*Dropping asleep.*] Yes—you are right—just as you please——

*Mrs Love.* Had I been inclined to follow the example of other women, your fortune would have felt it before now. You might have been thousands out of pocket; but your interest has been the object of my attention; and your conenience——

*Love.* [*Turns his chair from her.*] You reason very——you reason admir—ably——admir—ably——al—ways—— al—ways——gay——and enter—entertaining—— [*Going to sleep.*

*Mrs Love.* Marriage is generally considered as an introduction to the great scene of the world. I thought it a retreat to less noisy and serener pleasures. What is called polite company [*He falls fast asleep.*] was not my taste. You was lavish in expence; I was, therefore, an economist. From the moment marriage made me yours, the pleasure arising from your company——There! fast asleep! Agreeable company indeed!—This is ever his way. [*She rises.*] Unfeeling man!——It is too plain that I am grown his aversion. Mr Lovemore! [*Looking at him.*] you little think what a scene this day has brought to light——And yet he hopes with falsehood to varnish and disguise his treachery. How mean the subterfuge! shall I rouse him now, and tax him with his guilt! My heart is too full: reproach will only tend to exasperate, and perhaps make him irreconcilable. The pride that can stoop to low and wretched artifice, but ill can brook detection. Let him rest for the present. The widow Bellmour's experiment may answer better—I will try it, at least—Oh! Mr Lovemore, you will break my heart!

[*Looks at him, and exit.*

*Love.* [*Talking in his sleep.*] I do listen—I am not asleep. [*Sleeps and nods.*] You are very right—always right—I am only thinking a little. No—no—no—[*Mutters indistinctly.*] It was not two o'clock—in bed—in bed by twelve—— Sir Bashful is an oaf—The widow Bellmour—[*Sleeps, and his head rolls about.*]—What's the matter? [*Waking.*] I beg your pardon; I was beginning to nod. What did you say, my dear? [*Leans on the table, without looking about.*] One cannot always, you know—[*Turns about.*] 'Sdeath! she is gone! Oh! fast asleep. This is ever the way when one dines at home. Let me shake it off. [*Rises.*] What's o'clock?—No amusement in this house; what shall I do? The widow?—I must not venture in that quarter. My evil genius, sir Brilliant, will be busy there. Is any body in the way? I must sally out. My dear Venus, favour your votary this afternoon.

——Your best arms employ,
All winged with pleasure, and all tipt with joy.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* SIR BASHFUL'S.

*Enter* LADY CONSTANT *and* FURNISH.

*Lady Con.* Who brought this letter?

*Fur.* A servant of Mrs Lovemore's: he waits an answer.

*Lady Con.* My compliments to Mrs Lovemore, and I shall wait upon her.

*Fur.* Yes, madam. [*Going.*

*Lady Con.* And hark ye, Furnish?—have the things been carried to sir Brilliant, as I ordered?

*Fur.* I have obeyed your ladyship's commands. The steward went himself. Mr Pounce, your ladyship knows, is a trusty body. You may depend upon his care.

*Lady Con.* Go, and send Mrs Lovemore her answer. She may depend upon my being with her in time. [*Exit* FURNISH.] What can Mrs. Lovemore want? [*Reads*]—'Ladyship's company 'to a card-party; but cards are the least part of 'my object. I have something of higher mo-'ment in view, and the presence of my friends is 'absolutely necessary.' There is some mystery in this. What does she mean? I shall go, and then the scene will clear up: those diamond buckles embarrass me more than Mrs Lovemore's unintelligible letter. Diamond buckles to me! From what quarter? Who could send them? Nobody but sir Brilliant. I am right in my conclusion: they came from him. Who could take the liberty but a person of his cast? A presuming man! But I have mortified his vanity. Before this time, he has found his diamonds thrown back upon his hands, with the disdain which such confidence deserves—But if I have made a mistake!—Oh! no; no danger. Has not sir Brilliant made overtures to me? Has not he declared himself? He sees sir Bashful's behaviour, and his vanity plumes itself upon that circumstance. To give me my revenge against a crazy and insufferable husband, he would fain induce me to ruin myself with a coxcomb. Besides, he heard the whole of sir Bashful's dispute about diamonds and trinkets: the thing is clear; it was sir Brilliant sent them; and, by that stratagem, he hopes to bribe me into compliance—That bait will never take; though here comes one, who, I am sure, deserves to be treated without a grain of ceremony.

*Enter* SIR BASHFUL.

*Sir Bash.* Here she is. Now, let me see whether she will take any notice of the present I sent her. She has reason to be in good humour, I think—Your servant, madam.

*Lady Con.* Your address is polite, sir.

*Sir Bash.* [*Aside.*] Still proud and obstinate!—Has any thing happened to disturb the harmony of your temper?

*Lady Con.* Considering what little discord you make, it is a wonder that my temper is not always in tune.

*Sir Bash.* If you never gave me cause, madam———

*Lady Con.* Oh! for mercy's sake, truce with altercation. I am tired out with the eternal violence of your temper. Those frequent starts of passion hurry me out of my senses: and those unaccountable whims, that hold such constant possession of you——

*Sir Bash.* Whims, madam?—Not to comply with you in every thing, is a whim, truly! Must I yield to the exorbitant demands of your extravagance? When you laid close siege to me for diamond baubles, and I know not what, was that a whim of mine? Did I take that fancy into my head without cause, and without sufficient foundation?

*Lady Con.* Well, we have exhausted the subject. Have not you told me a thousand times, that there is no living with me? I agree to it. And have not I returned the compliment? We have nothing new to say; and now, all that remains, is to let the lawyer reduce to writing our mutual opinions, and so we may part with the pleasure of giving each other a most woful character.

*Sir Bash.* [*Aside.*] The buckles have had no effect. Stubborn! she has received them, and won't own it.

*Lady Con.* A dash of your pen, sir, at the foot of certain articles now preparing, will make us both easy. [*Going.*

*Sir Bash.* If we don't live happily, it is your own fault.

*Lady Con.* That is very odd.

*Sir Bash.* If you would control your passion for play—

*Lady Con.* Quite threadbare!

*Sir Bash.* I have still a regard for you.

*Lady Con.* Worn-out to frippery!—I can't hear any more. The law will dress it up in new language for us, and that will end our differences. [*Exit.*

*Sir Bash.* [*Alone.*] I must unburthen my heart: there is no time to be lost. I love her; I admire her; she inflames my tenderest passions, and raises such a conflict here in my very heart, I cannot any longer conceal the secret from her. I'll go and tell her all this moment.—But then, that meddling fiend, her maid, will be there: po! I can turn her out of the room: but then, the jade will suspect something. Her ladyship may be alone: I'll send to know where she is. Who is there? Sideboard—

*Enter* SIDEBOARD.

*Sir Bash.* Go and tell your lady that——— [*Pauses.*

*Side.* Did your honour want me?

*Sir Bash.* No matter; it does not signify.—[*Aside.*] I shall never be able to tell her my mind: a glance of her eye, and my own confusion, will undo all.

*Side.* I thought your honour called.

*Sir Bash.* [*Aside.*]—A thought comes across me; I'll write her a letter. Yes, yes, a letter will do the business. Sideboard, draw that table this way—Reach me a chair.

*Side.* There, your honour.

*Sir Bash.* Do you stay while I write a letter. You shall carry it for me. [*Sits down to write.*

*Side.* Yes, sir. I hope he has an intrigue upon his hands. A servant thrives under a master that has his private amusements. Love on, say I, if you are so given; it will bring grist to my mill.

*Sir Bash.* [*Writing.*] This will surprise her. Warm, passionate, and tender! and yet it does not come up to what I feel.

*Side.* What is he at?—I may as well read the news-paper. [*Takes it out of his pocket.*] What, in the name of wonder, is all this?——Ha, ha! [*Bursts into a loud laugh.*] I never heard the like of this before. Oh, ho, ho, ho!

*Sir Bash.* What does the scoundrel mean? [*Stares at him.*

*Side.* Ha, ha ha! I can't help laughing.

*Sir Bash.* Does the villain suspect me? [*Rises.*] Hark ye, sirrah, if ever I find that you dare listen at any door in my house—

*Side.* Sir!

*Sir Bash.* Confess the truth: have not you been listening to my conversation with Mr Lovemore this morning?

*Side.* Who, I, sir? I would not be guilty of such a thing: I never did the like in all my days.

*Sir Bash.* What was you laughing at?

*Side.* A foolish thing in the newspaper, sir, that's all. I'll read it to your honour. [*Reads.*] We hear that a new comedy is now in rehearsal, and will speedily be performed, entitled, 'The Amorous Husband; or, The Man in Love with his own Wife.'

*Sir Bash* And what do you see to laugh at?

*Side.* See, sir? I have lived in a great many families, and never heard of the like before.

*Sir Bash.* [*Aside.*] There, there, there!——I shall be the butt of my own servants.—Sirrah, leave the room. And let me never hear that you have the trick of listening in my house.

*Side.* No, sir—The Man in love with his own Wife! [*Exit laughing.*

*Sir Bash.* What does the varlet mean?—No matter—I have finished my letter, and it shall be sent this moment.——But then, if I should get into a comedy? Po! no more scruples. I'll seal it directly—Sideboard—

*Enter* SIDEBOARD.

*Sir Bash.* [*Sealing the letter.*] I have opened my heart to her. What do you bring your hat and stick for?

*Side.* To go out with your honour's letter.

*Sir Bash.* You have not far to go. Take this, and let nobody see you.

*Side.* I warrant me, your honour. [*Exit.*

*Sir Bash.* I feel much lighter now. A load is taken off my heart.

*Enter* SIDEBOARD.

*Sir Bash.* What do you come back for?

*Side.* A word or two, by way of direction, if you please, sir.

*Sir Bash.* Blockhead! Give it to me—[*Aside.*]—If I direct it, he finds me out. Go about your business: I have no occasion for you: leave the room.

*Side.* Very well, sir. Does he think to manage his own intrigues? If he takes my commission out of my hands, I shall give him warning. The vices of our masters are all the vails a poor servant has left. [*Exit.*

*Sir Bash.* What must be done? Mr Lovemore could conduct this business for me. He is a man of address, and knows all the approaches to a woman's heart. That fellow Sideboard coming again? No, no; this is lucky. Mr Lovemore, I am glad to see you.

*Enter* LOVEMORE.

*Love.* A second visit, you see, in one day; entirely on the score of friendship.

*Sir Bash.* And I thank you for it; heartily thank you.

*Love.* I broke away from the company at the St Alban's, on purpose to attend you. Well, I have made your lady easier in her mind, have not I?

*Sir Bash.* We don't hit it at all, Mr Lovemore?

*Love.* No!

*Sir Bash.* I think she has been rather worse since you spoke to her.

*Love.* A good symptom that. [*Aside.*

*Sir Bash.* She has received the diamond buckles. They were delivered to her maid, sealed up, and the man never staid to be asked a question. I saw them in her own hand; but not a syllable escaped her. She was not in the least softened; obstinate as a mule!

*Love.* The manner of conveying your presents was not well judged. Why did you not make me the bearer?

*Sir Bash.* I wish I had. She talks of parting; and so, to avoid coming to extremities, I have even thought of telling her the whole truth at once.

*Love.* How? Acquaint her with your passion?

*Sir Bash.* Ay, and trust to her honour. I could not venture to speak; I should blush, and faulter, and look silly; and so I have writ a letter to her. Here it is, signed and sealed, but not directed. I got into a puzzle about that. Servants, you know, are always putting their own construction upon things.

*Love.* No doubt: and then your secret flies all over the town.

*Sir Bash.* That's what alarmed me. You shall write the superscription, and send it to her.

*Love.* No; that won't do. Give her a letter under your hand! I'll speak to her for you: let me try how her pulse beats.

*Sir Bash.* But a letter may draw an answer from her, and then you know—[*Smiling at him.*]—I shall have it under her hand.

*Love.* I don't like this hurry: we had better take time to consider of it.

*Sir Bash.* No: I cannot defer the business of my heart a single moment. It burns like a fever here. Sit down, and write the direction; I'll step and send the servant. He shall carry it, as if it were a letter from yourself.

*Enter* SIDEBOARD.

*Side.* Sir Brilliant Fashion is below, sir.

*Love.* What brings him? He will only interrupt us. Go, and talk to him, sir Bashful; hear what he has to say; amuse him; any thing, rather than let him come up.

*Sir Bash.* I am gone; he shan't molest you. [*Exit with* SIDEBOARD.

*Love.* Fly! make haste; and don't let him know that I am here. A lucky accident this! I have gained time by it. All matters were in a right train, and he himself levelling the road for me, and now this letter blows me up into the air at once. Some unlucky planet rules to-day.—First, the widow Bellmour; a hair-breadth escape I had of it, and now almost ruined here! What, in the name of wonder, has he writ to her? Friendship and wafer, by your leave. But, will that be delicate? Po! honour has always a great deal to preach upon these occasions; but then, the business of my love! Very true; the passions need but say a word, and their business is done.—[*Opens the letter, and reads.*]—This must never reach her. I'll write a letter from myself.—[*Sits down, writes, and starts up.*]—I hear him coming: no; all's safe.—[*Writes.*]—This will do: vastly well. Her husband's inhumanity! Ay, mention that. The diamonds may be a present from me: yes, I'll venture it—There, there; that will do—Long adored—ay—sweetest revenge.—Ay—eternal admirer——Lovemore. Now, now, let me see it. Admirable! this will do the business. [*Seals the letter.*

*Enter* SIR BASHFUL.

*Sir Bash.* Well, have you sent it?

*Love.* Not yet: I am writing the direction.

*Sir Bash.* And where is that blockhead? Sideboard!

*Enter* SIDEBOARD.

Numskull! Why don't you wait? Mr Lovemore wants you.

*Love.* Step and deliver this to your lady, and, if she pleases, I will wait upon her.

*Sir Bash.* Charming!—Take it up stairs directly.

*Side.* Up stairs, sir? My lady is in the next room.

*Sir Bash.* Take it to her; make haste; begone! [*Exit* SIDEBOARD.] I hope this will succeed: I shall be for ever obliged to you, and so will her ladyship.

*Love.* I hope she will, and I shall be proud to serve her.

*Sir Bash.* You are very good. She won't prove ungrateful, I dare answer for her. I should like to see how she receives the letter. The door is conveniently open. I will have a peep. Ay, there; there she sits.

*Love.* Where, sir Bashful?

*Sir Bash.* Hush! no noise. There, do you see her? She has the letter in her hand——This is a critical moment: I am all over in a tremble.

*Love.* Silence! not a word. She opens it.—[*Aside.*] Now, my dear Cupid, befriend me now, and your altar shall smoke with incense.

*Sir Bash.* She colours.

*Love.* I like that rising blush: a soft and tender token.

*Sir Bash.* She turns pale.

*Love.* The natural working of the passions.

*Sir Bash.* And now she reddens again. What is she at now? There, she has torn the letter in two: I am a lost, an undone man! [*Walks away.*

*Love.* She has flung it away with indignation: I am undone, too.

[*Aside, and walks away from the door.*

*Sir Bash.* Mr Lovemore, you see what it is all come to.

*Love.* I am sorry to see so haughty a spirit.

*Sir Bash.* An arrogant, ungrateful woman, to make such a return to so kind a letter!

*Love.* Ay, so kind a letter!

*Sir Bash.* Did you ever see such an insolent scorn?

*Love.* I never was so disappointed in all my life.

*Sir Bash.* A letter full of the tenderest protestations!

*Love.* Yes; an unreserved declaration of love!

*Sir Bash.* Made with the greatest frankness; throwing myself at her very feet.

*Love.* Did she once smile? was there the faintest gleam of approbation in her countenance?

*Sir Bash.* She repaid it all with scorn, with pride, contempt, and insolence. I cannot bear this; despised, spurned, and treated like a puppy.

*Love.* There it stings—like a puppy, indeed!

*Sir Bash.* Is there a thing in nature so mortifying to the pride of man, as to find one's self rejected and despised by a fine woman, who is conscious of her power, and triumphs in her cruelty?

*Love.* It is the most damnable circumstance!

*Sir Bash.* My dear Mr Lovemore, I am obliged to you for taking this matter so much to heart.

*Love.* I take it more to heart than you are aware of.

*Sir Bash.* This is mortifying; enough to make one ashamed all the rest of one's life.

*Love.* I did not expect this sullen ill-humour.

*Sir Bash.* Did you ever know so obstinate, so uncomplying a temper?

*Enter* SIR BRILLIANT.

*Sir Bril.* Sir Bashful, I forgot to tell you—

*Love.* He again! he haunts me up and down, as Vice did the devil, with a dagger of lath, in the old comedy. [*Aside.*

*Sir Bril.* Hey! what's the matter? You seem both out of humour: what does this mean? Have you quarrelled?

*Sir Bash.* No, sir, no quarrel:—Why would my booby servant let him in again? [*Aside.*

*Sir Bril.* Strike me stupid, but you look very queer upon it! Lovemore is borrowing money, I suppose. Sir Bashful is driving a hard bargain, and you can't agree about the premium. Sir Bashful, let my friend Lovemore have the money.

*Sir Bash.* Money!—what does he mean?

*Sir Bril.* Both out of humour, I see: well, as you will. You have no reason to be in harmony with yourselves; my stars shine with a kinder aspect. Here, here, behold a treasury of love! I came back on purpose to shew it to you. [*Takes a shagreen case out of his pocket.*] See what a present I have received; a magnificent pair of diamond buckles, by all that's amiable!

*Love.* How?

*Sir Bash.* [*Walking up to him.*] A pair of diamond buckles!

*Sir Bril.* How such a present should be sent to me, is more than I can explain at present. Perhaps my friend, Lovemore, gained some intelligence in the quarter where I surprised him to-day, on a visit which I little suspected.

*Love.* That was to serve you: I know nothing of this business.

*Sir Bril.* The pain in your side, I hope, is better?

*Love.* Po! this is only to distract your attention, sir Bashful.

*Sir Bash.* So I suppose. And was this a present to you?

*Sir Bril.* A present, sir. The consequence of having some tolerable phrase, a person, and a due degree of attention to the service of the ladies. Don't you envy me, sir Bashful?

*Sir Bash.* I can't but say I do. [*Turns to* LOVEMORE.] My buckles, by all that's false in woman!

*Love.* Take no notice. [*Walks aside.*] Has he supplanted me here, too, as well as with the widow?

*Sir Bril.* What's the matter with you both?—Burning with envy!

*Sir Bash.* And I suppose an elegant epistle, or

a well-penned billet-doux, accompanied this token of the lady's affection?

*Sir Bril.* That would have been an agreeable addition, but it is still to come. Too many favours at once might overwhelm a body. A country-looking fellow, as my people tell me, left this, curiously sealed up, at my house: he would not say from whence it came: I should know that in time, was all they could get from him; and I am now panting to learn from whence this mighty success has attended me. Sir Bashful, I came, saw, and conquered. Ha, ha, ha, ha!

*Sir Bash.* But may not this be from some lady, who imagines that you sent it, and therefore chuses to reject your present?

*Sir Bril.* Oh, no; that cannot be the case. A little knowledge of the world would soon convince you, that ladies do not usually reject presents from the man who has the good fortune to please by his manner, his taste for dress, and a certain *je ne scai quoi* in his person and conversation.

*Sir Bash.* So I believe. [*Walks aside.*] What say you to this, Mr Lovemore?

*Love.* She would not have torn a letter from him.

*Sir Bril.* No, sir Bashful; a present from me would not have been returned back upon my hands.

*Sir Bash.* I dare say not. [*To* LOVE.] I suppose she will give him my three hundred pounds into the bargain.

*Love.* After this, I shall wonder at nothing.

*Sir Bril.* What mortified countenances they both put on! [*Looks at them, and laughs.*

*Sir Bash.* [*Walking up to* SIR BRIL.] And I suppose you expect to have this lady?

*Sir Bril.* No doubt of it. This is the forerunner, I think. Hey, Lovemore?—Sir Bashful, this it is to be in luck. Ha, ha!

[*Laughs at them both.*

*Love. and Sir Bash.* [*Both forcing a laugh.*] Ha, ha!

*Sir Bril.* You both seem strangely piqued.—Lovemore, what makes you so uneasy?

*Love.* You flatter yourself, and you wrong me—I—I— [*Walks away.*

*Sir Bash.* He is a true friend: he is uneasy on my account. [*Aside, and looking at* LOVE.

*Sir Bril.* And, sir Bashful, something has dashed your spirits. Do you repine at my success?

*Sir Bash.* I can't but say I do, sir.

*Sir Bril.* Oh! very well; you are not disposed to be good company. *A l'honneur*, gentlemen: finish your money matters. Lovemore, where do you spend the evening?

*Love.* A good evening to you, sir Brilliant: I am engaged. Business with sir Bashful, you see———

*Sir Bril.* Well, don't let me be of inconvenience to you. Fare ye well, gentlemen. Thou dear pledge of love [*Looking at the buckles.*], thus let me clasp thee to my heart.—Sir Bashful, your servant. [*Exit* SIR BRIL.

*Sir Bash.* What think you now, Mr Lovemore?

*Love.* All unaccountable, sir.

*Sir Bash.* By all that's false, I am gulled, cheated, and imposed upon! I am deceived, and dubbed a rank cuckold! It is too clear: she has given him the buckles, and, I suppose, my bank-notes have taken the same course. Diamond buckles, and three hundred pounds, for sir Brilliant! A reward for his merit!

*Love.* He is the favourite, and I have been working for him all this time! [*Aside.*

*Sir Bash.* I now see through all her artifices. My resolution is fixed. If I can but get ocular demonstration of her guilt; if I can but get the means of proving to the whole world that she is vile enough to cuckold me, I shall then be happy.

*Love.* Why, that will be some consolation!

*Sir Bash.* So it will: kind Heaven, grant me that at least! make it plain that she dishonours me, and I am amply revenged! Hark! I hear her coming. She shall know all I think, and all I feel. I have done with her for ever.

*Love.* [*Aside.*] Let me fly the impending storm. If I stay, detection and disgrace pursue me. Sir Bashful, I am sorry to see matters take this turn. I have done all in my power; and, since there is no room to hope for success, I take my leave, and wish you a good night.

*Sir Bash.* No, no; you shall not leave me in this distress. You shall hear me tell her her own, and be a witness of our separation.

[*Holding him.*

*Love.* Excuse me: after what has passed, I shall never be able to endure the sight of her.—Fare you well; I must be gone; good night, sir Bashful. [*Struggling to go.*

*Sir Bash.* You are my best friend: I cannot part with you. [*Stands between him and the door.*] Stay and hear what she has to say for herself: you will see what a turn she will give to the business.

*Love.* [*Aside.*] What turn shall I give it?——Confusion! here she comes: I must weather the storm.

*Enter* LADY CONSTANT.

*Lady Con.* After this behaviour, Mr Lovemore, I am surprised, sir, that you can think of staying a moment longer in this house.

*Love.* Madam, I——'sdeath! I have no invention to assist me at a pinch. [*Aside.*

*Sir Bash.* Mr Lovemore is my friend, madam, and I desire he will stay in my house as long as he pleases. Hey, Lovemore!

[*Looks at him, and smiles.*

*Love.* [*Aside.*] All must out, I fear.

*Lady Con.* Your friend, sir Bashful! And do you authorise him to take this unbecoming liber-

ty? Have you given him permission to send me a letter, so extravagant in the very terms of it?

*Love.* [*Aside.*] Ay, now 'tis coming, and impudence itself has not a word to say.

*Sir Bash.* I desired him to send that letter, madam.

*Love.* Sir Bashful desired me, madam.

[*Bowing respectfully.*

*Sir Bash.* I desired him.

*Love.* All at his request, madam.

*Lady Con.* And am I to be made your sport? I wonder, Mr Lovemore, that you would condescend to make yourself a party in so poor a plot. Do you presume upon a trifling mark of civility, which you persuaded me to accept of this morning? Do you come, disguised under a mask of friendship, to help this gentleman in his design against my honour, and my happiness?

*Love.* [*Aside.*] Fairly caught, and nothing can bring me off——

*Sir Bash.* A mask of friendship! He is a true friend, madam: he sees how ill I am treated; and, let me tell you, there is not a word of truth in that letter.

*Love.* Not a syllable of truth, madam. [*Aside.*] This will do: his own nonsense will save me.

*Sir Bash.* It was all done to try you, madam.

*Love.* Nothing more, madam: merely to try you.

*Sir Bash.* By way of experiment only: just to see how you would behave upon it.

*Love.* Nothing else was intended; all to try you, madam.

*Lady Con.* You have been both notably employed. The exploit is worthy of you. Your snare is spread for a woman; and if you had succeeded, the fame of so bright an action would add mightily to two such illustrious characters.

*Sir Bash.* A snare spread for her! Mark that, Mr Lovemore: she calls it ensnaring!

*Love.* Ensnared to her own good. [*To* SIR BASHFUL.] He has pleaded admirably for me.

[*Aside.*

*Lady Con.* As to you, sir Bashful, I have long ago ceased to wonder at your conduct: you have lost the power of surprising me; but when Mr Lovemore becomes an accomplice in so mean a plot——

*Sir Bash.* I am in no plot, madam; and nobody wants to ensnare you; do we, Lovemore?

*Love.* Sir Bashful knows that no harm was intended.

*Sir Bash.* Yes, I am in the secret, and my friend Lovemore meant no harm.

*Love.* If the letter had succeeded, sir Bashful knows there would have been no ill consequence.

*Sir Bash.* No harm in nature; but I now see how things are; and since your ladyship will listen to nothing for your own good, it is too plain, from all that has passed between us, that our tempers are by no means fitted for each other, and I am ready to part whenever you please:—nay, I will part.

*Lady Con.* And that is the only point in which we can agree, sir.

*Sir Bash.* Had the letter been sent from another quarter, it would have met with a better reception: we know where your smiles are bestowed.

*Lady Con.* Deal in calumny, sir; give free scope to malice; I disdain your insinuations.

*Sir Bash.* The fact is too clear, and reproaches are now too late. This is the last of our conversing together; and you may take this by the way, you are not to believe one syllable of that letter.

*Love.* There is not a syllable of it deserves the least credit, madam.

*Sir Bash.* It was all a mere joke, madam: was not it, Lovemore? And as to your being a fine woman, and as to any passion that any body has conceived for you, there was no such thing; you can witness for me, Lovemore: can't you?

*Lady Con.* Oh! you are witnesses for one another.

*Love.* Sir Bashful knows the fairness of my intentions, and I know his. [*Aside.*] He has acquitted me better than I expected; thanks to his absurdity.

*Lady Con.* Go on, and aggravate your ill usage, gentlemen.

*Sir Bash.* It was all a bam, madam; a scene we thought proper to act. Let us laugh at her.

[*Goes up to* LOVEMORE.

*Love.* With all my heart——[*Aside.*] A silly blockhead! I can't help laughing at him.

[*Laughing heartily.*

*Sir Bash.* [*Laughing with him.*] Ha, ha, ha!—all a bam; nothing else; a contrivance to make sport for ourselves—hey, Lovemore?

*Lady Con.* This usage is insupportable. I shall not stay for an explanation. Two such worthy confederates!—Is my chair ready there? You may depend, sir, that this is the last time you will see me in this house. [*Exit.*

*Sir Bash.* Agreed; a bargain; with all my heart. Lovemore, I have managed this well.

*Love.* Charmingly managed! I did not think you had so much spirit.

*Sir Bash.* I have found her out. The intrigue is too plain. She and sir Brilliant are both detected.

*Love.* I never suspected that sir Brilliant was the happy man. I wish I had succeeded, had it been only to mortify his vanity.

*Sir Bash.* And so do I: I wish it too, but never own the letter; deny it to the last.

*Love.* You may depend upon my secrecy.

*Sir Bash.* I am for ever obliged to you. A foolish woman! how she stands in her own light!

*Love.* Truly, I think she does. But since I have no interest with her ladyship, I shall now

sound a retreat, and leave matters to your own discretion. Success attend you! [*Going.*

*Sir Bash.* You must not forsake me in this distress.

*Love.* Had your lady proved tractable, I should not have cared how long I had staid. But since things are come to this pass, I shall now go and see what kind of reception I am to meet with from Mrs Lovemore.

*Sir Bash.* Don't let her know that you have a regard for her.

*Love.* Oh! no; I see the consequence.—[*Aside.*] Well off this time; and, madam Fortune, if I trust you again, you shall play me what prank you please. Sir Bashful, yours. [*Going.*

*Sir Bash.* A thousand thanks to you. And, hark ye, if I can serve you with your lady——

*Love.* I am much obliged to you: but I shall endeavour to go on, without giving you the trouble of assisting me. And, do you hear? assure my lady Constant, that I meant nothing but to serve your interest. [*Exit.*

*Sir Bash.* Rely upon my management. I can acquit you.—My lady Constant! lady Constant!—Let me chase her from my thoughts! Can I do it? Rage, fury, love—no more of love! I am glad she tore the letter. Odso! yonder it lies. It is only torn in two, and she may still piece the fragments together. I'll pick up the letter this moment: it shall never appear in evidence against me. As to sir Brilliant, his motions shall be watched; I know how to proceed with madam, and, if I can but prove the fact, every body will say that I am ill used by her. [*Exit.*

## ACT V.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment at* MR LOVEMORE'S.

*Enter* MRS LOVEMORE, *elegantly dressed;* MUSLIN *following her.*

*Mus.* WHY, to be sure, madam, it is so for certain, and you are very much in the right of it.

*Mrs Love.* I fancy I am: I see the folly of my former conduct. I am determined never to let my spirits sink into a melancholy state again.

*Mus.* Why, that's the very thing, madam; the very thing I have been always preaching up to you. Did not I always say, see company, madam, take your pleasure, and never break your heart for any man? This is what I always said.

*Mrs Love.* And you have said enough: spare yourself the trouble now.

*Mus.* I always said so. And what did the world say? Heavens bless her for a sweet woman! and a plague go with him, for an inhuman, barbarous, bloody—murdering brute.

*Mrs Love.* Well, truce with your impertinence; your tongue runs on at such a rate—

*Mus.* Nay, don't be angry: they did say so indeed. But, dear heart, how every body will be overjoyed when they find you have plucked up a little! As for me, it gives me new life, to have so much company in the house, and such a racketting at the door with coaches and chairs, enough to hurry a body out of one's wits. Lard! this is another thing; and you look quite like another thing, madam; and that dress quite becomes you. I suppose, madam, you will never wear your negligee again. It is not fit for you indeed, madam. It might pass very well with some folks, madam; but the like of you——

*Mrs Love.* Will you never have done? Go and see who is coming up stairs.

*Enter* MRS BELLMOUR.

Mrs Bellmour, I revive at the sight of you. Muslin, do you step, and do as I ordered you.

*Mus.* What the deuce can she be at now? [*Exit.*

*Mrs Bell.* You see I am punctual to my time. ——Well, I admire your dress of all things. It's mighty pretty.

*Mrs Love.* I am glad you like it. But, under all this appearance of gaiety, I have at the bottom but an aching heart.

*Mrs Bell.* Be ruled by me, and I'll answer for the event. Why really, now you look just as you should do.—Why neglect so fine a figure?

*Mrs Love.* You are so obliging!

*Mrs Bell.* And so true——What was beautiful before, is now heightened by the additional ornaments of dress; and if you will but animate and inspire the whole with those graces of the mind, which I am sure you possess, the impression cannot fail of being effectual upon all beholders; even upon the depraved mind of Mr Lovemore——You have not seen him since, have you?

*Mrs Love.* He dined at home, but was soon upon the wing to his usual haunts.

*Mrs Bell.* If he does but come home time enough, depend upon it my plot will take. And have you got together a good deal of company?

*Mrs Love.* Yes, a tolerable party.

*Mrs Bell.* That's right: shew him that you will consult your own pleasure.

*Mrs Love.* Apropos, as soon as I came home, I received a letter from sir Brilliant, in a style of warmth and tenderness, that would astonish you. He begs to see me again, and has something particular to communicate. I left it in my dressing-room; you shall see it by and by: I took your advice, and sent him word he might come. The

lure brought him hither immediately: he makes no doubt of his success with me.

*Mrs Bell.* Well! two such friends as sir Brilliant and Mr Lovemore, I believe, never existed!

*Mrs Love.* Their falsehood to each other is unparallelled. I left sir Brilliant at the card-table: as soon as he can disengage himself, he will quit his company in pursuit of me. I forgot to tell you, my lady Constant is here.

*Mrs Bell.* Is she?

*Mrs Love.* She is, and has been making the strangest discovery: Mr Lovemore has had a design there too!

*Mrs Bell.* Oh! I don't doubt him; but the more proof we have, the better.

*Mrs Love.* There is sufficient proof: you must know, madam—[*A rap at the door.*]—As I live and breathe, I believe that is Mr Lovemore!

*Mrs Bell.* If it is, every thing goes on as I could wish.

*Mrs Love.* I hear his voice; it is he! How my heart beats!

*Mrs Bell.* Courage, and the day's our own. He must not see me yet: where shall I run?

*Mrs Love.* In there, madam. Make haste; I hear his step on the stairs.

*Mrs Bell.* Success attend you! I am gone.
[*Exit.*

*Mrs Love.* I am frightened out of my senses. What the event may be I fear to think; but I must go through with it.

*Enter* LOVEMORE.

You are welcome home, sir.

*Love.* Mrs Lovemore, your servant. [*Without looking at her.*]

*Mrs Love.* It is somewhat rare to see you at home so early.

*Love.* I said I should come home, did not I? I always like to be as good as my word—What could the widow mean by this usage? to make an appointment, and break it thus abruptly.
[*Aside.*

*Mrs Love.* He seems to muse upon it. [*Aside.*

*Love.* [*Aside.*] She does not mean to do so treacherous a thing as to jilt me? Oh, Lord! I am wonderfully tired.
[*Yawns, and sinks into an armed chair.*

*Mrs Love.* Are you indisposed, my dear?

*Love.* No, my love; I thank you, I am very well—a little fatigued only, with jolting over the stones all the way into the city this morning. I have paid a few visits this afternoon—Confoundedly tired——Where's William?

*Mrs Love.* Do you want any thing?

*Love.* Only my cap and slippers. I am not in spirits, I think. [*Yawns.*

*Mrs Love.* You are never in spirits at home, Mr Lovemore.

*Love.* I beg your pardon: I never am any where more cheerful. [*Stretching his arms.*] I wish I may die if I an't very happy at home——very [*Yawns.*] very happy!

*Mrs Love.* I can hear otherwise. I am informed that Mr Lovemore is the promoter of mirth and good humour wherever he goes.

*Love.* Oh! no; you over-rate me; upon my soul, you do.

*Mrs Love.* I can hear, sir, that no person's company is so acceptable to the ladies; that your wit inspires every thing: you have your compliment for one, your smile for another, a whisper for a third, and so on, sir: you divide your favours, and are every where, but at home, all whim, vivacity, and spirit.

*Love.* Ho! ho! [*Laughing.*] how can you talk so? I swear I can't help laughing at the fancy. All whim, vivacity, and spirit! I shall burst my sides. How can you banter one so?—I divide my favours, too!——Oh, Heavens! I can't stand this raillery. Such a description of me!—I that am rather saturnine, of a serious cast, and inclined to be pensive! I can't help laughing at the oddity of the conceit——Oh Lord! Oh Lord! [*Laughs.*

*Mrs Love.* Just as you please, sir. I see that I am ever to be treated with indifference. [*Walks across the stage.*]

*Love.* [*Rises, and walks a contrary way.*] I can't put this widow Bellmour out of my head.
[*Aside.*

*Mrs Love.* If I had done any thing to provoke this usage, this cold, determined contempt—
[*Walking.*

*Love.* I wish I had done with that business entirely; but my desires are kindled, and must be satisfied. [*Aside.*

[*They walk for some time silently by each other.*]

*Mrs Love.* What part of my conduct gives you offence, Mr Lovemore?

*Love.* Still harping upon that ungrateful string!—but prithee don't set me a laughing again——Offence! nothing gives me offence, child!—you know I am very fond—[*Yawns, and walks.*]—I like you of all things, and think you a most admirable wife—prudent, managing—careless of your own person, and very attentive to mine—not much addicted to pleasure—grave, retired, and domestic; you govern your house, pay the tradesmen's bills, [*Yawns.*] scold the servants, and love your husband:—upon my soul, a very good wife!—as good a sort of a wife [*Yawns.*] as a body might wish to have—Where's William? I must go to bed.

*Mrs Love.* To bed so early! Had not you better join the company?

*Love.* I shan't go out to-night.

*Mrs Love.* But I mean the company in the dining-room.

*Love.* Company in the dining-room!
[*Stares at her.*

*Mrs Love.* Yes: I invited them to a rout.

*Love.* A rout in my house!—and you dressed out, too!—What is all this?

*Mrs Love.* You have no objection, I hope?

*Love.* Objection!—No, I like company, you know, of all things; I'll go and join them: who are they all?

*Mrs Love.* You know them all; and there's your friend, Sir Brilliant.

*Love.* Is he there? I shall be glad to see him. But, pray, how comes all this about?

*Mrs Love.* I intend to see company often.

*Love.* Do you?

*Mrs Love.* Ay; and not look tamely on, while you revel luxuriously in a course of pleasure. I shall pursue my own plan of diversion.

*Love.* Do so, madam: the change in your temper will not be disagreeable.

*Mrs Love.* And so I shall, sir, I assure you. Adieu to melancholy, and welcome pleasure, wit, and gaiety. [*She walks about, and sings.*

*Love.* What the devil has come over her? And what in the name of wonder does all this mean?

*Mrs Love.* Mean, sir!—It means, it means—how can you ask me what it means?—Well, to be sure, the sobriety of that question!—Do you think a woman of spirit can have leisure to tell her meaning, when she is all air, alertness, rapture, and enjoyment?

*Love.* She is mad!—stark mad!

*Mrs Love.* You're mistaken, sir—not mad, but in spirits, that's all. Am I too flighty for you?—Perhaps I am: you are of a saturnine disposition, inclined to think a little or so. Well, don't let me interrupt you; don't let me be of any inconvenience. That would be the impolitest thing; a married couple to be interfering and encroaching on each other's pleasures! Oh, hideous! it would be Gothic to the last degree. Ha, ha, ha!

*Love.* [*Forcing a laugh.*] Ha, ha!—Madam, you—ha, ha! you are perfectly right.

*Mrs Love.* Nay, but I don't like that laugh now: I positively don't like it. Can't you laugh out, as you were used to do? For my part, I'm determined to do nothing else all the rest of my life.

*Love.* This is the most astonishing thing! Madam, I don't rightly comprehend—

*Mrs Love.* Oh Lud! oh Lud!—with that important face! Well, but come! what don't you comprehend?

*Love.* There is something in this treatment that I don't so well——

*Mrs Love.* Oh! are you there, sir! How quickly they, who have no sensibility for the peace and happiness of others, can feel for themselves, Mr Lovemore!—But that's a grave reflection, and I hate reflection.

*Love.* What has she got into her head? This sudden change, Mrs Lovemore, let me tell you——

*Mrs Love.* Nay, don't be frightened: there is no harm in innocent mirth, I hope: never look so grave upon it. I assure you, sir, that though, on your part, you seem determined to offer constant indignities to your wife, and though the laws of retaliation would in some sort exculpate her, if, when provoked to the utmost, exasperated beyond all enduring, she should, in her turn, make him know what it is to receive an injury in the tenderest point—

*Love.* Madam! [*Angrily.*

*Mrs Love* Well, well; don't be alarmed. I shan't retaliate: my own honour will secure you there; you may depend upon it.—Will you come and play a game at cards? Well, do as you like; you won't come? No, no, I see you won't—What say you to a bit of supper with us? Nor that neither?—Follow your inclinations: it is not material what a body eats, you know; the company expects me; adieu, Mr Lovemore, yours, yours. [*Exit singing.*

*Love.* This is a frolic I never saw her in before!—Laugh all the rest of my life!—laws of retaliation!—an injury in the tenderest point!—the company expects me—adieu! yours, yours!—[*Mimicking her.*] What the devil is all this? Some of her female friends have been tampering with her. So, so: I must begin to look a little sharp after madam. I'll go this moment into the card-room, and watch whom she whispers with, whom she ogles with, and every circumstance that can lead to— [*Going.*

*Enter* MUSLIN, *in a hurry.*

*Mus.* Madam, madam—here's your letter; I would not for all the world that my master——

*Love.* What, is she mad, too? What's the matter, woman?

*Mus.* Nothing, sir—nothing: I wanted a word with my lady; that's all, sir.

*Love.* You would not for the world that your master—What was you going to say?—what paper's that?

*Mus.* Paper, sir!

*Love.* Paper, sir! Let me see it.

*Mus.* Lord, sir! how can you ask a body for such a thing? It's a letter to me, sir—a letter from the country; a letter from my sister, sir. She bids me to buy her a *shiver de frize* cap, and a sixteenth in the lottery; and tells me of a number she dreamt of, that's all, sir: I'll put it up.

*Love.* Let me look at it. Give it me this moment. [*Reads.*] 'To Mrs Lovemore!'—Brilliant Fashion. This is a letter from the country, is it?

*Mus.* That, sir—that is—no, sir—no;—that's not sister's letter.—If you will give me that back, sir, I'll shew you the right one.

*Love.* Where did you get this?

*Mus.* Sir!

*Love.* Where did you get it?—Tell me truth.

*Mus.* Dear heart, you fright a body so—in the parlour, sir—I found it there.

*Love.* Very well!—leave the room.

*Mus.* The devil fetch it, I was never so out in my politics in all my days. [*Exit* MUS.

*Love.* A pretty epistle truly! [*Reads.*] 'When 'you command me, my dearest Mrs Lovemore, 'never to touch again upon the subject of love, 'you command an impossibility. You excite the 'flame, and forbid it to burn. Permit me once 'more to throw myself on my knees, and implore 'your compassion.'——Compassion, with a vengeance on him!——'Think you see me now, with 'tender, melting, supplicating eyes, languishing at 'your feet.'——Very well, sir——'Can you find 'it in your heart to persist in cruelty?—Grant 'me but access to you once more, and, in addition to what I already said this morning, I will 'urge such motives.'—Urge motives, will ye?—'as will convince you, that you should no longer 'hesitate, in gratitude, to reward him, who here 'makes a vow of eternal constancy and love.

BRILLIANT FASHION.'

So, so, so! your very humble servant, sir Brilliant Fashion!—This is your friendship for me, is it?—You are mighty kind, indeed, sir—but I thank you as much as if you had really done me the favour: and, Mrs Lovemore, I'm your humble servant, too. She intends to laugh all the rest of her life! This letter will change her note. Yonder she comes along the gallery, and sir Brilliant in full chase of her. They come this way. Could I but detect them both now! I'll step aside, and who knows but the devil may tempt them to their undoing. A polite husband I am: there's the coast clear for you, madam. [*Exit.*

*Enter* MRS LOVEMORE *and* SIR BRILLIANT.

*Mrs Love.* I have already told you my mind, sir Brilliant. Your civility is odious; your compliments fulsome; and your solicitations insulting.——I must make use of harsh language, sir: you provoke it.

*Sir Bril.* Not retiring to solitude and discontent again, I hope, madam! Have a care, my dear Mrs Lovemore, of a relapse.

*Mrs Love.* No danger, sir: don't be too solicitous about me. Why leave the company? Let me intreat you to return, sir.

*Sir Bril.* By Heaven, there is more rapture in being one moment *vis-a-vis* with you, than in the company of a whole drawing-room of beauties. Round you are melting pleasures, tender transports, youthful loves, and blooming graces, all unfelt, neglected, and despised, by a tasteless, cold, unimpassioned husband, while they might be all so much better employed to the purposes of ecstacy and bliss.

*Mrs Love.* I am amazed, sir, at this liberty.—What action of my life has authorized this assurance!——I desire, sir, you will desist. Were I not afraid of the ill consequences that might follow, I should not hesitate a moment to acquaint Mr Lovemore with your whole behaviour.

*Sir Bril.* She won't tell her husband!——A charming creature, and blessings on her for so convenient a hint! She yields, by all my hopes!—What shall I say to overwhelm her senses in a flood of nonsense? [*Aside.*

Go, my heart's envoys; tender sighs, make haste—
Still drink delicious poisons from the eye—
Raptures and paradise
Pant on thy lip, and to thy heart be pressed.
[*Forcing her all this time.*

*Enter* MR LOVEMORE.

*Love.* Hell and distraction! this is too much.

*Sir Bril.* What the devil's the matter now? [*Kneels down to buckle his shoe.*] This confounded buckle is always plaguing me. Lovemore! I rejoice to see thee. [*Looking at each other.*

*Love.* And have you the confidence to look me in the face?

*Sir Bril.* I was telling your lady here of the most whimsical adventure——

*Love.* Don't add the meanness of falsehood to the black attempt of invading the happiness of your friend. I did imagine, sir, from the long intercourse that has subsisted between us, that you might have had delicacy enough, feeling enough, honour enough, sir, not to meditate an injury like this.

*Sir Bril.* Ay, it's all over, I am detected. [*Aside.*] Mr Lovemore, I feel that I have been wrong, and will not attempt a vindication of myself. We have been friends hitherto, and, if begging your pardon for this rashness will any ways atone——

*Love.* No, sir; nothing can atone. The provocation you have given me would justify my drawing upon you this instant, did not that lady, and this roof, protect you.

*Sir Bril.* Harsh language to a friend——

*Love.* Friend, sir Brilliant!

*Sir Bril.* If you will but hear me——

*Love.* Sir, I insist; I won't hear a word.

*Sir Bril.* I declare upon my honour——

*Love.* Honour! for shame, sir Brilliant! honour and friendship are sacred words, and you profane them both.

*Sir Bril.* If imploring forgiveness of that lady—

*Love.* That lady!—I desire you will never speak to that lady.

*Sir Bril.* Can you command a moment's patience?

*Love.* Sir, I am out of all patience: this must be settled between us: I have done for the present.

*Enter* SIR BASHFUL.

*Sir Bash.* Did not I hear loud words among you? I certainly did. What are you quarrelling about?

*Love.* Read that, sir Bashful. [*Gives him* SIR

BRILLIANT'S *letter.*] Read that, and judge if I have not cause—[SIR BASHFUL *reads to himself.*

*Sir Bril.* Hear but what I have to say—

*Love.* No, sir, no; we shall find a fitter time. As for you, madam, I am satisfied with your conduct. I was, indeed, a little alarmed, but I have been a witness of your behaviour, and I am above harbouring low suspicions.

*Sir Bash.* Upon my word, Mr Lovemore, this is carrying the jest too far.

*Love.* It is the basest action a gentleman can be guilty of; and, to a person who never injured him, still more criminal.

*Sir Bash.* Why, so I think. Sir Brilliant, [*To him, aside.*] here, take this letter, and read it to him—his own letter to my wife.

*Sir Bril.* Let me see it— [*Takes the letter.*

*Sir Bash.* 'Tis indeed, as you say, the vilest action a gentleman can be guilty of.

*Love.* An unparalleled breach of friendship.

*Sir Bril.* Not altogether so unparalleled: I believe it will not be found without a precedent—as, for example:— [*Reads.*

'To my LADY CONSTANT'———

'Why should I conceal, my dear madam, that 'your charms have awakened my tenderest pas-'sion?'

*Love.* Confusion!—my letter— [*Aside.*

*Sir Bril.* [Reading] 'I long have loved you, 'long adored. Could I but flatter myself'—

[LOVEMORE *walks about uneasy;* SIR BRILLIANT *follows him.*]

*Sir Bash.* There, Mr Lovemore, the basest treachery!

*Sir Bril.* [Reads.] 'Could I but flatter myself with the least kind return.'

*Love.* Confusion! let me seize the letter out of his hand. [*Snatches it from him.*

*Sir Bash.* An unparalleled breach of friendship, Mr Lovemore.

*Love.* All a forgery, sir; all a forgery.

*Sir Bash.* That I deny; it is the very identical letter my lady threw away with such indignation. She tore it in two, and I have pieced it together.

*Love.* A mere contrivance to varnish his guilt.

*Sir Bril.* Ha, ha! my dear Lovemore, we know one another. Have not you been at the same work with the widow Bellmour?

*Love.* The widow Bellmour!—If I spoke to her, it was to serve you, sir.

*Sir Bril.* Are you sure of that?

*Love.* Po! I won't stay a moment longer among ye. I'll go into another room to avoid ye all. I know little or nothing of the widow Bellmour, sir. [*Opens the door.*

*Enter* MRS BELLMOUR.

Hell and destruction!——what fiend is conjured up here? Zoons! let me make my escape out of the house. [*Runs to the opposite door.*

*Mrs Love.* I'll secure this pass: you must not go, my dear.

*Love.* 'Sdeath, madam, give me way.

*Mrs Love.* Nay, don't be in such a hurry: I want to introduce an acquaintance of mine to you.

*Love.* I desire, madam———

*Mrs Bel.* My lord, my lord Etheridge; I am heartily glad to see your lordship.

[*Taking hold of him.*

*Mrs Love.* Do, my dear, let me introduce this lady to you.

*Love.* Here's the devil and all to do! [*Aside.*

*Mrs Bell.* My lord, this is the most fortunate encounter.

*Love.* I wish I was fifty miles off.—— [*Aside.*

*Mrs Love.* Mrs Bellmour, give me leave to introduce Mr Lovemore to you.

[*Turning him to her.*

*Mrs Bell.* No, my dear madam, let me introduce lord Etheridge to you. [*Pulling him.*] My lord—

*Sir Bril.* In the name of wonder, what is all this?

*Sir Bash.* This is another of his intrigues blown up.

*Mrs Love.* My dear madam, you are mistaken: this is my husband.

*Mrs Bell.* Pardon me, madam; 'tis my lord Etheridge.

*Mrs Love.* My dear, how can you be so ill-bred in your own house?—Mrs Bellmour—this is Mr Lovemore.

*Love.* Are you going to toss me in a blanket, madam?—call up the rest of your people, if you are.

*Mrs Bell.* Pshaw! prithee now, my lord, leave off your humours. Mrs Lovemore, this is my lord Etheridge, a lover of mine, who has made proposals of marriage to me.

*Love.* Confusion! let me get rid of these two furies. [*Breaks away from them.*

*Sir Bash.* He has been tampering with her, too, has he?

*Mrs Bell.* [*Follows him.*] My lord, I say! my Lord Etheridge! won't your lordship know me?

*Love.* This is the most damnable accident! [*Aside.*

*Mrs Bell.* I hope your lordship has not forgot your appointment at my house this evening?

*Love.* I deserve all this. [*Aside.*

*Mrs Bell.* Pray, my lord, what have I done, that you treat me with this coldness? Come, come, you shall have a wife: I will take compassion on you.

*Love.* Damnation! I can't stand it. [*Aside.*

*Sir Bash.* Murder will out: murder will out.

*Mrs Bel.* Come, cheer up, my lord: what the deuce, your dress is altered! what's become of the star and ribband? And so the gay, the florid, the *magnifique* lord Etheridge, dwindles down into plain Mr Lovemore, the marr?ed man! Mr Lovemore, your most obedient, very humble servant,

*Love.* I can't bear to feel myself in so ridiculous a circumstance. [*Aside.*

*Sir Bash.* He has been passing himself for a lord, has he?

*Mrs Bell.* I beg my compliments to your friend Mrs Loveit: I am much obliged to you both for your very honourable designs.

[*Curtseying to him.*

*Love.* I was never so ashamed in all my life!

*Sir Bril.* So, so, so, all his pains were to hide the star from me. This discovery is a perfect cordial to my dejected spirits.

*Mrs Bel.* Mrs Lovemore, I cannot sufficiently acknowledge the providence that directed you to pay me a visit, though I was wholly unknown to you; and I shall henceforth consider you as my deliverer.

*Love.* So! it was she that fainted away in the closet, and be damned to her jealousy! [*Aside.*

*Sir Bril.* By all that's whimsical, an odd sort of an adventure this! My lord, [*Advances to him.*] my lord, my lord Etheridge, as the man says in the play, 'Your lordship is right welcome 'back to Denmark.'

*Love.* Now he comes upon me.—Oh! I'm in a fine situation! [*Aside.*

*Sir Bril.* My lord, I hope that ugly pain in your lordship's side is abated.

*Love.* Absurd, and ridiculous. [*Aside.*

*Sir Bril.* There is nothing forming there, I hope, my lord?

*Love.* I shall come to an explanation with you, sir.

*Sir Bril.* The tennis-ball from lord Racket's unlucky left hand.

*Love.* No more at present, sir Brilliant. I leave you now to yourselves, and—[*Goes to the door in the back scene.*]—'sdeath, another fiend! I am beset by them.

*Enter* LADY CONSTANT.

No way to escape?

[*Attempts both stage doors, and is prevented.*

*Lady Con.* Mr Lovemore, it is the luckiest thing in the world, that you are come home.

*Love.* Ay; it is all over—all must come to light.

*Lady Con.* I have lost every rubber; quite broke; four by honours against me every time. Do, Mr Lovemore, lend me another hundred.

*Love.* I would give an hundred pounds you were all in Lapland. [*Aside.*

*Lady Con.* Mrs Lovemore, let me tell you, you are married to the falsest man; he has deceived me strangely.

*Mrs Love.* I begin to feel for him, and to pity his uneasiness.

*Mrs Bell.* Never talk of pity; let him be probed to the quick.

*Sir Bash.* The case is pretty plain, I think, now, sir Brilliant?

*Sir Bril.* Pretty plain, upon my soul! Ha, ha!

*Love.* I'll turn the tables upon sir Bashful, for all this—[*Takes* SIR BASHFUL'S *letter out of his pocket.*]—where is the mighty harm now in this letter?

*Sir Bash.* Where's the harm?

*Love.* [*Reads.*] 'I cannot, my dearest life, any 'longer behold'——

*Sir Bash.* Shame and confusion! I am undone! [*Aside.*

*Love.* Hear this, sir Bashful—'The manifold 'vexations, of which, through a false prejudice, I 'am myself the occasion.'

*Lady Con.* What is all this?

*Sir Bash.* I am a lost man! [*Aside.*

*Love.* Mind, sir Bashful.—'I am therefore re-'solved, after many conflicts with myself, to 'throw off the mask, and frankly own a passion, 'which the fear of falling into ridicule, has, in 'appearance, suppressed.'

*Sir Bash.* 'Sdeath! I'll hear no more of it.

[*Snatches at the letter.*

*Love.* No, sir; I resign it here, where it was directed; and, with it, these notes which sir Bashful gave me for your use.

*Lady Con.* It is his hand, sure enough.

*Love.* Yes, madam, and those are his sentiments, which he explained to me more at large.

*Lady Con.* [*Reads.*] 'Accept the presents 'which I myself have sent you; money, attend-'ance, equipage, and every thing else you shall 'command; and, in return, I shall only entreat 'you to conceal from the world that you have 'raised a flame in this heart, which will ever 'show me,

Your admirer,
And your truly affectionate husband,
BASHFUL CONSTANT.'

*All.* Ha, ha!——

*Sir Bril.* So, so, so! he has been in love with his own wife all this time, has he? Sir Bashful, will you go and see the new comedy with me!

*Sir Bash.* I shall blush through the world all the rest of my life. [*Aside.*

*Sir Bril.* Lovemore, don't you think it a base thing to invade the happiness of a friend? or to do him a clandestine wrong? or to injure him with the woman he loves?

*Love.* To cut the matter short with you, sir, we have been traitors to each other; a couple of unprincipled, unreflecting profligates.

*Sir Bril.* Profligates?

*Love.* Ay! both! we are pretty fellows, indeed!

*Mrs Bell.* I am glad to find you are awakened to a sense of your error.

*Love.* I am, madam; and frank enough to own it. I am above attempting to disguise my feelings, when I am conscious they are on the side of truth and honour. With the sincerest remorse, I ask your pardon. I should ask pardon of my lady Constant, too; but the fact is, sir Bashful threw the whole affair in my way; and, when

husband will be ashamed of loving a valuable woman, he must not be surprised, if other people take her case into consideration, and love her for him.

*Sir Bril.* Why, faith, that does, in some sort, make his apology.

*Sir Bash.* Sir Bashful! sir Bashful! thou art ruined. [*Aside.*

*Mrs Bell.* Well, sir, upon certain terms, I don't know but I may sign and seal your pardon.

*Love.* Terms! What terms?

*Mrs Bell.* That you make due expiation of your guilt to that lady. [*Pointing to* MRS LOVE.

*Love.* That lady, madam! That lady has no reason to complain.

*Mrs Love.* No reason to complain, Mr Lovemore?

*Love.* No, madam, none; for, whatever may have been my imprudencies, they have had their source in your conduct.

*Mrs Love.* In my conduct, sir?

*Love.* In your conduct:—I here declare before this company, and I am above misrepresenting the matter; I here declare, that no man in England could be better inclined to domestic happiness, if you, madam, on your part, had been willing to make home agreeable.

*Mrs Love.* There, I confess, he touches me. [*Aside.*

*Love.* You could take pains enough before marriage; you could put forth all your charms; practise all your arts, and make your features please by rule; for ever changing; running an eternal round of variety; and all this to win my affections: but when you had won them, you did not think them worth your keeping; never dressed, pensive, silent, melancholy; and the only entertainment in my house, was the dear pleasure of a dull conjugal *tête-à-tête;* and all this insipidity, because you think the sole merit of a wife consists in her virtue: a fine way of amusing a husband, truly!

*Sir Bril.* Upon my soul, and so it is——— [*Laughing.*

*Mrs Love.* Sir, I must own there is too much truth in what you say. This lady has opened my eyes, and convinced me there was a mistake in my former conduct.

*Love.* Come, come; you need say no more. I forgive you; I forgive.

*Mrs Love.* Forgive! I like that air of confidence, when you know that, on my side, it is, at worst, an error in judgment; whereas, on yours—

*Mrs Bell.* Po! po! never stand disputing: you know each other's faults and virtues; you have nothing to do but to mend the former, and enjoy the latter. There, there; kiss and friends. There, Mrs Lovemore, take your reclaimed libertine to your arms.

*Love.* 'Tis in your power, madam, to make a reclaimed libertine of me indeed.

*Mrs Love.* From this moment it shall be our mutual study to please each other.

*Love.* A match, with all my heart. I shall, hereafter, be ashamed only of my follies, but never ashamed of owning that I sincerely love you.

*Sir Bash.* Shan't you be ashamed?

*Love.* Never, sir.

*Sir Bash.* And will you keep me in countenance?

*Love.* I will.

*Sir Bash.* Give me your hand. I now forgive you all. My lady Constant, I own the letter; I own the sentiments of it [*Embraces her.*]; and, from this moment, I take you to my heart.——— Lovemore, zookers! you have made a man of me. Sir Brilliant, come; produce the buckles.

*Lady Con.* If you hold in this humour, sir Bashful, our quarrels are at an end.

*Sir Bril.* And now, I suppose, I must make restitution here——

[*Gives* LADY CONSTANT *the buckles.*

*Sir Bash.* Ay, ay; make restitution. Lovemore! this is the consequence of his having some tolerable phrase, and a person, Mr Lovemore! ha, ha!

*Sir Bril.* Why, I own the laugh is against me. With all my heart; I am glad to see my friends happy at last. Lovemore, may I presume to hope for pardon at that lady's hands?

[*Points to* MRS LOVEMORE.

*Love.* My dear confederate in vice, your pardon is granted. Two sad libertines we have been. But come, give us your hand: we have used each other scurvily: for the future, we will endeavour to atone for the errors of our past misconduct.

*Sir Bril.* Agreed; we will, henceforward, behave like men, who have not forgot the obligations of truth and honour.

*Love.* And now, I congratulate the whole company, that this business has had so happy a tendency to convince each of us of our folly.

*Mrs Bell.* Pray, sir, don't draw me into a share of your folly.

*Love.* Come, come, my dear madam, you are not without your share of it. This will teach you, for the future, to be content with one lover at a time, without listening to a fellow you know nothing of, because he assumes a title, and spreads a fair report of himself.

*Mrs Bell.* The reproof is just; I grant it.

*Love.* Come, let us join the company cheerfully, keep our own secrets, and not make ourselves the town-talk.

*Sir Bash.* Ay, ay; let us keep the secret.

*Love.* What, returning to your fears again? you will put me out of countenance, sir Bashful.

*Sir Bash.* I have done.

*Love.* When your conduct is fair and upright, never be afraid of ridicule. Real honour, and generous affection, may bid defiance to all the small wits in the kingdom. In my opinion, were

the business of this day to go abroad into the world, it might prove a very useful lesson: the men would see how their passions may carry them into the danger of wounding the bosom of a friend: and the ladies would learn, that, after the marriage rites are performed, they ought not to suffer their powers of pleasing to languish away, but should still remember to sacrifice to the graces.

To win a man, when all your pains succeed,
The WAY TO KEEP HIM, is a task indeed.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

# ALL IN THE WRONG.

BY

*MURPHY.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### MEN.

SIR JOHN RESTLESS, *jealous of his wife.*
BEVERLEY, *attached to* BELINDA.
SIR WILLIAM BELLMONT.
YOUNG BELLMONT, *his son.*
BLANDFORD, *father to* BELINDA.
ROBERT, *servant to* SIR JOHN.
BRUSH, *servant to* BEVERLEY.

### WOMEN.

LADY RESTLESS, *wife to* SIR JOHN.
BELINDA, *attached to* BEVERLEY.
CLARISSA, *attached to* YOUNG BELLMONT.
TATTLE, *maid to* LADY RESTLESS.
TIPPET, *maid to* BELINDA.
MARMALET, *a waiting woman.*

*Scene—London.*

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—*The Park.*

*Enter* SIR JOHN RESTLESS *and* ROBERT, *from a house in the side scene.*

*Sir John.* SIR John Restless! sir John Restless! thou hast played the fool with a vengeance! What devil whispered thee to marry such a woman?——Robert, you have been a faithful servant, and I value you. Did your lady go out at this door here into the Park, or did she go out at the street-door?

*Rob.* This door, sir.

*Sir John.* Robert, I will never live in a house again that has two doors to it.

*Rob.* Sir!

*Sir John.* I will give warning to my landlord instantly. The eyes of Argus are not sufficient to watch the motions of a wife, where there is a street-door, and a back-door, to favour her escapes.

*Rob.* Upon my word, sir, I wish—you will pardon my boldness, sir—I wish you would shake off this uneasiness that preys upon your spirits. It grieves me to the heart—it does, indeed, sir, to see you in this way: banish your suspicions: you have conceived some strange aversion, I am afraid, to my lady, sir?

*Sir John.* No, Robert; no aversion: in spite of me, I dote upon her still.

*Rob.* Then, why will you not think generously, sir, of the person you love? My lady, I dare be sworn———

*Sir John.* Is false to me. That embitters my whole life. I love her, and she repays me with ingratitude, with perfidy, with falsehood, with—

*Rob.* I dare be sworn, sir, she is a woman of honour.

*Sir John.* Robert, I have considered you as a friend in my house: don't you betray me, too: don't attempt to justify her.

*Rob.* Dear sir, if you will but give me leave: you have been an indulgent master to me, and I am only concerned for your welfare. You married my lady for love, and I have heard you so warm in her praise: why will you go back from those sentiments?

*Sir John.* Yes, I married her for love—Oh! love! love! what mischief dost thou not occa-

sion in this world? Yes, Robert, I married her for love. When first I saw her, I was not so much struck with her beauty, as with that air of an ingenuous mind that appeared in her countenance; her features did not so much charm me with their symmetry, as that expression of sweetness, that smile, that indicated affability, modesty, and compliance. But, honest Robert, I was deceived: I was not a month married, when I saw her practising those very smiles at her glass: I saw through the artifice; plainly saw there was nothing natural in her manner, but all forced, all studied, put on with her head-dress. I was alarmed; I resolved to watch her from that moment, and I have seen such things!

*Rob.* Upon my word, sir, I believe you wrong her, and wrong yourself: you build on groundless surmises; you make yourself unhappy, and my lady, too; and, by being constantly uneasy, and never shewing her the least love, you'll forgive me, sir—you fill her mind with strange suspicions, and so the mischief is done.

*Sir John.* Suspicions, Robert?

*Rob.* Yes, sir; strange suspicions! My lady finds herself treated with no degree of tenderness; she infers that your inclinations are fixed elsewhere, and so she is become—you will pardon my blunt honesty—she is become downright jealous—as jealous as yourself, sir.

*Sir John.* Oh! Robert, you are little read in the arts of women; you little know the intricacies of their conduct; the mazes through which they walk, shifting, turning, winding, running into devious paths, but tending all through a labyrinth into the temple of Venus. You cannot see, that all her pretences to suspect me of infidelity, are merely a counter-plot to cover her own loose designs. It is but a gauze covering, though; it is seen through, and only serves to shew her guilt the more.

*Rob.* Upon my word, sir John, I cannot see—

*Sir John.* No, Robert; I know you cannot.—Her suspicions of me all make against her; they are female stratagems; and yet, it is but too true, that she still is near my heart. Oh! Robert, Robert! When I have watched her at a play or elsewhere; when I have counted her oglings, and her whisperings, her stolen glances, and her artful leer, with the cunning of her sex, she has pretended to be as watchful of me: dissembling, false, deceitful woman!

*Rob.* And yet, I dare assure you——

*Sir John.* No more; I am not to be deceived; I know her thoroughly, and now—now—has not she escaped out of my house, even now?

*Rob.* But with no bad design.

*Sir John.* I am the best judge of that: which way did she go?

*Rob.* Across the Park, sir; that way, towards the Horse Guards.

*Sir John.* Towards the Horse Guards! There—there—there, the thing is evident: you may go in, Robert.

*Rob.* Indeed, sir, I——

*Sir John.* Go in, I say; go in.

*Rob.* There is no persuading him to his own good. [*Exit* ROB.

*Sir John.* Gone towards the Horse Guards! My head aches; my forehead burns; I am cutting my horns. Gone towards the Horse Guards! I'll pursue her thither; if I find her, the time, the place, all will inform against her. Sir John! Sir John! you were a madman to marry such a woman. [*Exit.*

*Enter* BEVERLEY *and* BELLMONT, *at opposite sides.*

*Bev.* Ha! My dear Bellmont? A fellow sufferer in love is a companion well met.

*Bel.* Beverley, I rejoice to see you.

*Bev.* Well! I suppose the same cause has brought us both into the Park: both come to sigh our amorous vows in the friendly gloom of yonder walk. Belinda keeps a perpetual war of love and grief, and hope and fear in my heart: and let me see—[*Lays his hand on* BELLMONT'S *breast.*]—how fares all here? I fancy my sister is a little busy with you?

*Bel.* Busy! She makes a perfect riot there.—Not one wink the whole night. Oh! Clarissa, her form so animated! Her eyes so——

*Bev.* Prithee! truce; I have not leisure to attend to her praise: a sister's praise, too! the greatest merit I could ever see in Clarissa is, that she loves you freely and sincerely.

*Bel.* And, to be even with you, sir, your Belinda! upon my soul, notwithstanding all your lavish praises, her highest perfection, in my mind, is her sensibility to the merit of my friend.

*Bev.* Oh, Bellmont! Such a girl! But tell me honestly, now, do you think she has ever betrayed the least regard for me?

*Bel.* How can you, who have such convincing proofs, how can you ask such a question? That uneasiness of yours, that inquietude of mind—

*Bev.* Prithee, don't fix that character upon me.

*Bel.* It is your character, my dear Beverley: instead of enjoying the object before you, you are ever looking back to something past, or conjecturing about something to come, and are your own self-tormentor.

*Bev.* No, no, no: don't be so severe: I hate the very notion of such a temper: the thing is, when a man loves tenderly, as I do, solicitude and anxiety are natural; and, when Belinda's father opposes my warmest wishes——

*Bel.* Why, yes; the good Mr Blandford is willing to give her in marriage to me.

*Bev.* The senseless old dotard!

*Bel.* Thank you for the compliment! And my father, the wise sir William Bellmont——

*Bev.* Is a tyrannical, positive, headstrong——

*Bel.* There again I thank you. But, in short, the old couple, Belinda's father and mine, have both agreed upon the match. They insist upon compliance from their children; so that, according to their wise heads, I am to be married off-hand to Belinda, and you and your sister, poor Clarissa, are to be left to shift for yourselves.

*Bev.* Racks and torments!

*Bel.* Racks and torments! Seas of milk and ships of amber, man! We are sailing to our wished for harbour, in spite of their machinations. I have settled the whole affair with Clarissa.

*Bev.* Have you?

*Bel.* I have; and to-morrow morning makes me possessor of her charms.

*Bev.* My dear boy, give us your hand: and then, thou dear rogue, and then Belinda's mine! Loll-toll-loll.

*Bel.* Well, may you be in raptures, sir; for here, here, here they both come.

*Enter* BELINDA *and* CLARISSA.

*Bev.* Grace was in all her steps; heaven in her eye; in every gesture dignity and love.

*Belin.* A poetical reception, truly! But cannot your passion inspire you to a composition of your own, Mr Beverley?

*Bev.* It inspires me with sentiments, madam, which I cannot find words to express. Suckling, Waller, Landsdown, and all our dealers in love-verses, give but a faint image of a heart touched like mine.

*Belin.* Poor gentleman! What a terrible taking you are in! But, if the sonneteers cannot give an image of you, sir, have you had recourse to a painter, as you promised me?

*Bev.* I have, Belinda, and here—here is the humble portrait of your adorer.

*Belin.* [*Takes the picture.*]—Well! there is a likeness; but, after all, there is a better painter than this gentleman, whoever he be.

*Bev.* A better! Now she is discontented!—[*Aside.*]—Where, madam, can a better be found? If money can purchase him——

*Belin.* Oh! sir, when he draws for money, he never succeeds. But, when pure inclination prompts him, then his colouring is warm indeed. He gives a portrait that endears the original.

*Bev.* Such an artist is worth the Indies!

*Belin.* You need not go so far to seek him: he has done your business already. The limner I mean, is a certain little blind god, called Love, and he has stamped such an impression of you here——

*Bev.* Madam, your most obedient: and I can tell you, that the very same gentleman has been at work for you too.

*Bel.* [*Who had been talking apart with* CLARISSA.]—Oh! he has had a world of business upon his hands, for we two have been agreeing what havock he has made with us.

*Cla.* Yes; but we are but in a kind of fool's paradise here: all our schemes are but mere castle-building, which your father, Mr Bellmont, and, my dear Belinda—yours, too, are most obstinately determined to destroy.

*Bel.* Why, as you say, they are determined that I shall have the honour of Belinda's hand, in the country-dance of matrimony.

*Belin.* Without considering that I may like another partner better.

*Bev.* And without considering that I, forlorn as I am, and my sister, there, who is as well inclined to a matrimonial game of romps as any girl in Christendom, must both of us sit down, and bind our brows with willow, in spite of our strongest inclinations to mingle in the groupe.

*Belin.* But we have planned our own happiness, and, with a little resolution, we shall be successful in the end, I warrant you. Clarissa, let us take a turn this way, and leave that love-sick pair to themselves: they are only fit company for each other, and we may find wherewithal to entertain ourselves.

*Cla.* Let us try: turn this way.

*Bel.* Are you going to leave us, Clarissa?

*Cla.* Only just sauntering into this side-walk: we sha'nt lose one another.

*Belin.* You are such a tender couple! you are not tired, I see, of saying pretty soft things to each other. Well, well! take your own way.

*Cla.* And, if I guess right, you are glad to be left together?

*Belin.* Who, I?

*Cla.* Yes, you; the coy Belinda!

*Belin.* Not I truly: let us walk together.

*Cla.* No, no; by no means: you shall be indulged. Adieu! we shall be within call.

[*Exeunt* BEL. *and* CLA.

*Bev.* My sister is generously in love with Bellmont: I wish Belinda would act as openly towards me. [*Aside.*

*Belin.* Well, sir! Thoughtful! I'll call Mr Bellmont back, if that is the case.

*Bev.* She will call him back.

[*Aside.*

*Belin.* Am I to entertain you, or you me?

*Bev.* Madam!

*Belin.* Madam!—ha, ha! why, you look as if you were frightened: are you afraid of being left alone with me!

*Bev.* Oh! Belinda, you know that is the happiness of my life—but——

*Belin.* But what, sir?

*Bev.* Have I done any thing to offend you?

*Belin.* To offend me?

*Bev.* I should have been of the party last night; I own I should; it was a sufficient inducement to me that you was to be there; it was my fault, and you, I see, are piqued at it.

*Belin.* I piqued!

*Bev.* I see you are; and the company perceived it last night. I have heard it all: in mere resentment you directed all your discourse to Mr Bellmont.

*Belin.* If I did, it was merely accidental.

*Bev.* No, it was deliberately done: forgive my rash folly in refusing the invitation: I meant no manner of harm.

*Belin.* Who imagines you did, sir?———

*Bev.* I beg your pardon, Belinda: you take offence too lightly.

*Belin.* Ha, ha! what have you taken into your head now? This uneasiness is of your own making: I have taken nothing ill, sir.

*Bev.* You could not but take it ill; but by all that's amiable about you, I meant not to incur your displeasure: forgive that abrupt answer I sent: I should have made a handsomer apology.

*Belin.* Apology! you was engaged, was not you?

*Bev.* I said so; I own it, and beg your pardon——

*Belin.* Beg my pardon! for what? Ha, ha!

*Bev.* I only meant——

*Belin.* Ha, ha! can you think I see any thing in your message to be offended at, sir?

*Bev.* I was wrong: I beg your pardon. Where you were concerned, I own I should have expressed myself with more delicacy, than those hasty words——I am engaged, and can't wait upon you to-night. I should have told you that my heart was with you, though necessity dragged me another way: this omission you resented. I could learn, since, what spirits you were in the the whole evening, though I enjoyed nothing in your absence. I could hear the sallies of your wit, the sprightliness of your conversation, and on whom your eyes were fixed the whole night.

*Belin.* They were fixed upon Mr Bellmont, you think?

*Bev.* Ay! and fixed with delight upon him, negociating the business of love before the whole company.

*Belin.* Upon my word, sir, whoever is your author, you are misinformed. You alarm me with these fancies, and you know I have often told you, that you are of too refining a temper: you create for yourself imaginary misunderstandings, and then are ever entering into explanations. But this watching for intelligence, from the spies and misrepresenters of conversation, betrays strong symptoms of jealousy. I would not be married to a jealous man for the world.

*Bev.* Now she's seeking occasion to break off. [*Aside.*]—Jealousy, madam, can never get admission into my breast. I am of too generous a temper: a certain delicacy I own I have; I value the opinion of my friends, and, when there are circumstances of a doubtful aspect, I am glad to set things in their true light. And if I do so with others, surely with you, on whom my happiness depends, to desire a favourable interpretation of my words and actions cannot be improper.

*Belin.* But these little humours may grow up, and gather into the fixed disease of jealousy at last. [LADY RESTLESS *crosses the stage, and rings a bell at the door.*] And there now—there goes a lady who is a victim to her own fretful imagination.

*Bev.* Who is the lady, pray?

*Belin.* My lady Restless. Walk this way, and I will give you her whole character. I am not acquainted with her ladyship, but I have heard much of her. This way.

[*Exeunt* BELINDA *and* BEVERLEY.

*Lady Rest.* [*Ringing at the door.*] What do these servants mean? There is something going forward here. I will be let in, or I will know the reason why. [*Rings again.*] But, in the mean time, sir John can let any body he pleases out at the street-door: I'll run up the steps here, and observe. [*Exit.*

TATTLE *opens the door,* MARMALET *follows her.*

*Tat.* Who rung this bell? I don't see any body; and yet I am sure the bell rung. Well, Mrs Marmalet, you will be going, I see?

*Mar.* Yes, Mrs Tattle; I am obliged to leave you. I'll step across the Park, and I shall soon reach Grosvenor-Square. When shall I see you at our house?

*Tat.* Heaven knows when I shall be able to get out: my lady leads us all such lives! I wish I had such another place as you have of it.

*Mar.* I have nothing to complain of.

*Tat.* No, that you have not: when shall I get such a gown as that you have on, by my lady? She will never fling off such a thing, and give it to a poor servant! Worry, worry, worry herself, and every body else, too.

*Re-enter* LADY RESTLESS.

*Lady Rest.* No; there is nobody stirring that way. What do I see? A hussy coming out of my house!

*Mar.* Well, I must be gone, Mrs Tattle; fare you well.

*Lady Rest.* She is dizened out, too! why did not you open the door, Tattle, when I rung?

*Tat.* I came as soon as possible, madam.

*Lady Rest.* Who have you with you here? What is your business, mistress?

[*To* MARMALET.

*Mar.* My business, madam?

*Lady Rest.* In confusion, too! The case is plain. You come here after sir John, I suppose?

*Mar.* I come after sir John, madam?

*Lady Rest.* Guilt in her face! Yes, after sir John: and, Tattle, you are in the plot aginst me; you were favouring her escape, were you?

*Tat.* I favour her escape, madam! What occasion for that? This is Mrs Marmalet, madam;

an acquaintance of mine, madam; as good a kind of body as any at all.

*Lady Rest.* Oh! very fine, mistress! you bring your creatures after the vile man, do you?

*Mar.* I assure you, madam, I am a very honest girl.

*Lady Rest.* Oh! I dare say so. Where did you get that gown?

*Mar.* La, madam! I came by it honestly; my lady Conquest gave it to me. I live with my lady Conquest, madam.

*Lady Rest.* What a complexion she has!—How long have you lived in London?

*Mar.* Three years, madam.

*Lady Rest.* In London three years with that complexion! it can't be: perhaps, she is painted: all these creatures paint. You are all so many painted dolls. [*Rubs her face with a white handkerchief.*] No, it does not come off. So, Mrs Tattle, you bring fresh country girls here to my house, do you?

*Tat.* Upon my credit, madam———

*Lady Rest.* Don't tell me! I see through this affair. Go you about your business, mistress, and let me never see you about my doors again: go, go your ways.

*Mar.* Lord, madam! I shan't trouble your house. Mrs Tattle, a good-day. Here's a deal to-do, indeed! I have as good a house as hers to go to, whatever she may think of herself.

[*Exit.*

*Lady Rest.* There, there, there! see there! she goes off in a huff! the way with them all.—Ay! I see how it is, Tattle: you false, ungrateful—that gown was never given her by a woman; she had that from sir John. Where is sir John?

*Tat.* Sir John an't at home, madam.

*Lady Rest.* Where is he? Where is he gone? When did he go out?

*Tat.* I really don't know, madam.

*Lady Rest.* Tattle, I know you fib, now. But I'll sift this to the bottom. I'll write to my lady Conquest to know the truth about that girl, that was here but now.

*Tat.* You will find I told you truth, madam.

*Lady Rest.* Very well, Mrs Pert. I'll go, and write this moment. Send Robert, to give me an account of his master. Sir John, sir John, you will distract me. [*Exeunt.*

*Re-enter* BELINDA *and* BEVERLEY.

*Belin.* Ay! but that quickness, that extreme sensibility, is what I am afraid of. I positively would not have a jealous husband for the world.

*Bev.* By Heaven! no earthly circumstance shall ever make me think injuriously of you. Jealousy! ha, ha, ha! it is the most ridiculous passion! ha, ha!

*Belin.* You may laugh, sir; but I know your over refining temper too well; and I absolutely will have it in our marriage articles, that I must not be plagued with your suspicions.

*Bev.* I subscribe, madam.

*Belin.* I will have no inquiries where I am going to visit: no following me from place to place: and if we should chance to meet, and you should perceive a man of wit, or a pretty fellow, speaking to me, I will not have you fidgetting about on your chair, knitting your brow, and looking at your watch—'My dear, is it not time 'to go home? my love, the coach is waiting?'—and, then, if you are prevailed upon to stay, I will not have you converse with a 'Yes, sir,' and a 'No, sir,' for the rest of the evening, and then wrangle with me in the carriage all the way home, and not be commonly civil to me for the rest of the night. I, positively, will have none of this.

*Bev.* Agreed, madam; agreed——

*Belin.* And you shan't tell me you are going out of town, and then steal privately to the play, or to Ranelagh, merely to be a spy upon me. I positively will admit no curiosity about my letters. If you were to open a letter of mine, I should never forgive you. I do verily believe, if you were to open my letters, I should hate you.

*Bev.* I subscribe to every thing you can ask. You shall have what female friends you please; lose your money to whom you please; dance with what beau you please; ride out with whom you please; go to what china-shop you please; and, in short, do what you please, without my attempting to bribe your footmen, or your maid, for secret intelligence.

*Belin.* Oh, lud! Oh, lud! that is the very strain of jealousy. Deliver me! there is my father yonder, and sir William Bellmont with him. Fly this instant! fly, Mr Beverly, down that walk; any where.

*Bev.* You promise, then——

*Belin.* Don't talk to me now: what would you be at? I am yours, and only yours, unalterably so. Fly! begone! leave me this moment.

*Bev.* I obey: I am gone. [*Exit.*

*Belin.* Now, they are putting their wise heads together to thwart all my schemes of happiness: but love, imperious love, will have it otherwise.

*Enter* MR BLANDFORD *and* SIR WILLIAM BELLMONT.

*Bland.* Sir William, since we have agreed upon every thing——

*Sir Wil.* Why yes, Mr Blandford, I think every thing is settled.

*Bland.* Why, then, we have only to acquaint the young people with our intentions, and so conclude the affair without delay.

*Sir Wil.* That is all, sir.

*Bland.* As to my girl, I don't mind her non-

sense about Beverley: she must do as I will have her.

*Sir Wil.* And my son, too; he must follow my directions. As to his telling me of his love for Clarissa, it is all a joke with me. Children must do as their parents will have them.

*Bland.* Ay, so they must; and so they shall. Hey! here is my daughter. So, Belinda! Well, my girl, sir William and I have agreed, and you are to prepare for marriage; that's all.

*Belin.* With Mr Beverley, sir?

*Bland.* Mr Beverley!

*Belin.* You know you encouraged him yourself, sir.

*Bland.* Well, well! I have changed my mind on that head: my friend, sir William, here, offers you his son. Do as I advise you: have a care, Belinda, how you disobey my commands.

*Belin.* But, sir——

*Bland.* But, madam! I must, and will be obeyed. You don't like him, you say: but I like him, and that's sufficient for you.

*Sir Wil.* And so it is, Mr Blandford. If my son pretended to have a will of his own, I should let him know to the contrary.

*Belin.* And can you, sir William, against our inclination, force us both?

*Bland.* Hold your tongue, Belinda; don't provoke me. What makes you from home? Go your ways back directly, and settle your mind.—I tell you, once for all, I will have my own way. Come, sir William, we will step to the lawyer's chambers. Go home, Belinda, and be observant of my commands. Come, sir William. What did you say? [*To* BELINDA.] You mutiny, do you? Don't provoke me. You know, Belinda, I am an odd sort of man, when provoked. Look ye here: mind what I say; I won't reason with you about the matter; my power is absolute, and, if you offer to rebel, you shall have no husband at all with my consent. I'll cut you off with a shilling; I'll see you starve; beg an alms; live miserable; die wretched: in short, suffer any calamity without the least compassion from me. If I find you an undutiful girl, I cast you off for ever. So there's one word for all.

[*Exit*: SIR WILLIAM *follows him.*

*Belin.* What will become of me? his inhumanity overcomes me quite—I can never consent: the very sight of this picture is enough to forbid it. Oh! Beverley, you are master of my heart. I'll go this instant—and—Heavens! I can scarce move. I am ready to faint.

*Enter* SIR JOHN.

*Sir John.* No tidings of her far or near.

*Belin.* How I tremble! I shall fall—no help?

*Sir John.* What do I see! a young lady in distress!

*Belin.* Oh!

[*Faints in his arms, and drops the picture.*

*Sir John.* She is fallen into a fit. Would my servants were in the way!

LADY RESTLESS, *at her window.*

*Lady Rest.* Where can this barbarous man be gone to?—How! under my very window!

*Sir John.* How cold she is! quite cold——

[*Lay his hand to her cheek.*

*Lady Rest.* How familiar he is with her!

*Sir John.* And yet she looks beautiful still.

*Lady Rest.* Does she so?

*Sir John.* Her eyes open——how lovely they look!

*Lady Rest.* Traitor!

*Sir John.* Her cheek begins to colour. Well, young lady, how fare you now, my dear?

*Lady Rest.* My dear, too!

*Belin.* Heavens! where am I?——

*Sir John.* Repose yourself awhile, or will you step into my house?

*Lady Rest.* No, truly, shan't she. Vile man! but I will spoil your sport. I will come down to you directly, and flash confusion in your face.

[*Exit from above.*

*Sir John.* Where do you live, madam?

*Belin.* In Queen's-square, sir, by the side of the Park.

*Sir John.* I will wait upon you: trust yourself with me. You look much better, now.—— Lean on my arm. There, there, I will conduct you. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter* LADY RESTLESS.

*Lady Rest.* Now, I'll make one among ye.—How! Fled! Gone! Which way? Is not that he, yonder? No—he went into my house, I dare say, as I came down stairs. Tattle, Tattle! Robert! Will nobody answer?

*Enter* TATTLE.

Where is sir John?

*Tat.* La! Madam, how should I know?

*Lady Rest.* Did not he go in this moment?

*Tat.* No, madam.

*Lady Rest.* To be sure you will say so. I'll follow him through the world, or I'll find him out. So, so—what is here? This is her picture, I suppose? I will make sure of this, at least: this will discover her to me, though she has escaped now. Cruel, false, deceitful man! [*Exit.*

*Tat.* Poor lady! I believe her head is turned, for my part. Well! I am determined I'll look out for another place, that's a sure thing I will.

[*Exit.*

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—SIR JOHN'S *house.*

*Enter* SIR JOHN *and* ROBERT.

*Sir John.* ROBERT, where is your lady?

*Rob.* In her own room, sir.

*Sir John.* Any body with her?

*Rob.* I cannot say, sir: my lady is not well.

*Sir John.* Not well! Fatigued with rioting about this town, I suppose. How long has she been at home?

*Rob.* About an hour, sir.

*Sir John.* About an hour! Very well, Robert, you may retire.—[*Exit* ROBERT.]—Now will I question her closely. So—so—so—she comes, leaning on her maid: finely dissembled! finely dissembled! but this pretended illness shall not shelter her from my strict inquiry. Soft a moment! If I could overhear what passes between them, it might lead to the truth. I'll work by stratagem. The hypocrite! How she acts her part! [*Exit.*

*Enter* LADY RESTLESS *and* TATTLE.

*Tat.* How are you now, Madam?

*Lady Rest.* Somewhat better, Tattle. Reach that chair. Tattle, tell me honestly, does that girl live with lady Conquest?

*Tat.* She does, madam, upon my veracity.

*Lady Rest.* Very well! You will be obstinate, I see; but I shall know the truth presently. I shall have an answer from her ladyship, and then all will come out.

*Tat.* You will hear nothing, madam, but what I have told you already.

*Lady Rest.* Tattle, Tattle, I took you up in the country, in hopes gratitude would make you my friend. But you are as bad as the rest of them. Conceal all you know: it is of very little consequence. I now see through the whole affair. Though it is the picture of a man, yet I am not to be deceived: I understand it all. This is some former gallant. The creature gave this to sir John, as a proof that she had no affection for any one but himself. What art he must have had to induce her to this! I have found him out at last.

SIR JOHN, *peeping in.*

*Sir John.* What does she say?

*Lady Rest.* I have seen enough to convince me what kind of man he is. The fate of us poor women is hard: we all wish for husbands, and they are the torment of our lives.

*Tat.* There is too much truth in what you say, madam.

*Sir John.* You join her, do you, Mrs Iniquity?

*Lady Rest.* What a pity it is, Tattle, that poor women should be under severer restraints than the men are!

*Sir John.* You repine for want of freedom, do you?

*Lady Rest.* Cruel laws of wedlock! The tyrant husband may triumph in his infidelity. He may securely trample upon all laws of decency and order: it redounds to his credit; gives him a fashionable air of vice, while a poor woman is obliged to submit to his cruelty. She remains tied to him for life, even though she has reason to entertain a mortal hatred for him.

*Sir John.* Oh! Very well argued, madam!

*Lady Rest.* What a pity it is, Tattle, that we cannot change our husbands, as we do our earrings, or our gloves!

*Sir John.* There is a woman of spirit!

*Lady Rest.* Tattle! Will you own the truth to me about that girl?

*Tat.* I really have told you the truth, madam.

*Lady Rest.* You won't discover, I see: very well! You may go down stairs.

*Tat.* I assure your ladyship——

*Lady Rest.* Go down stairs.

*Tat.* Yes, madam. [*Exit.*

*Lady Rest.* Would I had never seen my husband's face!

*Sir John.* I am even with you: I have as good wishes for you, I assure you.

*Lady Rest.* This picture here—Oh, the base man!

*Sir John.* The picture of her gallant, I suppose.

*Lady Rest.* This is really a handsome picture: what a charming countenance! It is perfumed, I fancy: the scent is agreeable.

*Sir John.* The jade! how eagerly she kisses it!

*Lady Rest.* Why had I not such a dear, dear man, instead of the brute, the monster——

*Sir John.* Monster! She does not mince the matter: plain downright English! I must contain my rage, and steal upon her meditations—So—so—so—

*Enters on tiptoe.*

*Lady Rest.* There is no falsehood in this look.

*Sir John.* [*Looking over her shoulder.*]—Oh! What a handsome dog she has chosen for herself!

*Lady Rest.* With you I could be for ever happy!

*Sir John.* You could, could you?

[*Snatches the picture.*

*Lady Rest.* [*Screams out.*]—Mercy on me!—Oh! is it you, sir?

*Sir John.* Now, madam! now, false one, have I caught you?

*Lady Rest.* You are come home at last, I find, sir.

*Sir John.* My lady Restless! My lady Restless! What can you say for yourself now?

*Lady Rest.* What can I say for myself, sir John?

*Sir John.* Ay, madam! this picture——

*Lady Rest.* Yes, sir, that picture!

*Sir John.* Will be evidence———

*Lady Rest.* Of your shame, sir John.

*Sir John.* Of my shame! 'Tis very true what she says: yes, madam, it will be an evidence of my shame: I feel that but too sensibly. But, on your part———

*Lady Rest.* You own it then, do you?

*Sir John.* Own it! I must own it, madam; though confusion cover me, I must own it: it is what you have deserved at my hands.

*Lady Rest.* I deserve it, sir John! Find excuses if you will. Cruel, cruel man! To make me this return at last. I cannot bear it. Oh! oh!—[*Cries.*]—Such black injustice!

*Sir John.* You may weep; but your tears are lost: they fall without effect. I now renounce you for ever. This picture will justify me to the wide world; it will shew what a base woman you have been.

*Lady Rest.* What does the man mean?

*Sir John.* The picture of your gallant, madam! The darling of your amorous hours, who gratifies your luxurious appetites abroad, and——

*Lady Rest.* Scurrilous wretch! Oh! sir, you are at your old stratagem, I find: recrimination, you think, will serve your turn.

*Sir John.* It is a pity, you know, madam, that a woman should be tied to a man for life, even though she has a mortal hatred for him.

*Lady Rest.* Artful hypocrite!

*Sir John.* That she cannot change her husband as she does her ear-rings or her gloves.

*Lady Rest.* Sir John, this is your old device: this won't avail you.

*Sir John.* Had the original of this fallen to your lot, you could kiss the picture for ever.—You can gloat upon it, madam; glue your very lips to it.

*Lady Rest.* Shallow artifice!

*Sir John.* With him you could be for ever happy.

*Lady Rest.* This is all in vain, sir John.

*Sir John.* Had such a dear, dear man fallen to your lot, instead of the brute, the monster—Am I a monster? I am; and you have made me so. The world shall know your infamy.

*Lady Rest.* Oh! Brave it out, sir; brave it out to the last; harmless, innocent man! You have nothing to blush for; nothing to be ashamed of; you have no intrigues, no private amours abroad. I have not seen any thing, not I.

*Sir John.* Madam, I have seen, and I now see, your paramour.

*Lady Rest.* That air of confidence will be of great use to you, sir. You have no convenient to meet you under my very window, to loll softly in your arms!

*Sir John.* Hey! how!

*Lady Rest.* Her arm thrown carelessly round your neck! Your hand tenderly applied to her cheek.

*Sir John.* 'Sdeath! that's unlucky—she will turn it against me! [*Aside.*

*Lady Rest.* You are in confusion, are you, sir? But why should you? You meant no harm——'You are safe with me, my dear—Will you step into my house, my love?' Yes, sir, you would fain bring her into my very house.

*Sir John.* My lady Restless, this evasion is mean and paltry. You beheld a young lady in distress.

*Lady Rest.* I know it; and you, tender-hearted man, could caress her out of mere compassion: you could gaze wantonly out of charity; from pure benevolence of disposition, you could convey her to some convenient dwelling. Oh! sir John, sir John!

*Sir John.* Madam, this well-acted passion—

*Lady Rest.* Don't imagine she has escaped me, sir.

*Sir John.* You may talk and rave, madam; but, depend upon it, I shall spare no pains to do myself justice on this occasion. Nor will I rest till———

*Lady Rest.* Oh! fy upon you, sir John: these artifices———

*Sir John.* Nor will I rest, madam, until I have found, by means of this instrument, here, in my hand, who your darling is. I will go about it straight. Ungrateful, treacherous woman!

[*Exit* SIR JOHN.

*Lady Rest.* Yes; go, under that pretext, in pursuit of your licentious pleasures. This ever has been his scheme to cloak his wicked practices: abandoned man! to face me down, too, after what my eyes so plainly beheld! I wish I could wring that secret out of Tattle. I'll step to my own room directly, and try, by menaces, by wheedling, by fair means, by foul means, by every means, to wrest it from her. [*Exit.*

## SCENE II.—*The Park.*

*Enter* SIR JOHN *and* ROBERT.

*Sir John.* Come hither, Robert. Look at this picture.

*Rob.* Yes, sir.

*Sir John.* Let me watch his countenance. Well! well! dost thou know it, Robert?

*Rob.* 'Tis a mighty handsome picture, sir.

*Sir John.* A handsome picture!—— [*Aside.*

*Rob.* The finest lady in the land need not desire a handsomer man, sir.

*Sir John.* How well he knows the purposes of it!—Well! well! honest Robert, tell me: well—who is it?—tell me?

*Rob.* Sir!

*Sir John.* You know whose picture it is: I know you do. Well! well! who—who—who is it?

*Rob.* Upon my word, sir, it is more than I can tell.

*Sir John.* Not know! I am convinced you do. So, own the truth: don't be a villain; don't.

*Rob.* As I am an honest man, sir———

*Sir John.* Be an honest man, then, and tell me. Did you never see such a smooth-faced, fiery-eyed, warm-complexioned, taper young fellow here about my house?

*Rob.* Never, sir.

*Sir John.* Not with my wife!—to drink chocolate of a morning, tea of an evening? Come, honest Robert, I'll give you a lease of a good farm. What say you? A lease for your life—well! well! —you may take your wife's life into the bargain. Well!

*Rob.* Believe me, sir John, I never saw——

*Sir John.* I'll add your child's life. Come, speak out—your own life, your wife's life, and your child's! now! now! a lease for three lives! Now, Robert!

*Rob.* As I hope for mercy, I never saw any such a gentleman!

*Sir John.* Robert, Robert, you are bribed by my wife.

*Rob.* No; as I am a sinner, sir.

*Sir John.* And the worst of sinners you will be, if you are a confederate in this plot against my peace and honour. Reflect on that, Robert.

*Enter a Footman.*

*Foot.* Pray, does not sir John Restless live somewhere hereabout?

*Sir John.* He does, friend; what is your business with him?

*Foot.* My business is with his lady.

*Sir John.* I guessed as much. [*Aside.*

*Foot.* I have a letter here for my lady Restless, sir.

*Sir John.* A letter for my lady!—from whom, pray?

*Foot.* From my lord Conquest.

*Sir John.* My lord Conquest! very well, friend: you may give the letter to me. I am sir John Restless: that is my house. Let me have the letter: I will take care of it.

*Foot.* I was ordered to deliver it into my lady's own hand.

*Sir John.* The devil you was! I must have the letter. I'll buy it of the rascal. [*Aside.*] Here, take this for your trouble, friend, [*Gives him money.*] and I'll take care of the letter.

*Foot.* I humbly thank your honour. [*Exit.*

*Sir John.* Now, now, now; let me see what this is. Now, my lady Restless; now false one, now. [*Reads.*]

'Madam,

'My lady Conquest being gone into the coun-
'try for a few days, I have judged it proper to
'send a speedy answer to yours, and to assure
'you, for your peace of mind, that you need not
'entertain the least suspicion of Marmalet, my
'lady's woman. She has lived some years in my
'family, and I know her by experience to be an
'honest, trusty girl, incapable of making mis-
'chief between your ladyship and sir John.

'I have the honour to be,

'Madam, your very humble servant,

'CONQUEST.'

So, so, so!—Marmalet is a trusty girl! one that will not make mischief between man and wife! that is to say, she will discover nothing against my lady Restless! for her peace of mind, he lets madam know all this, too! She may go on boldly now; my lady Conquest is gone into the country, Marmalet is trusty, and my lord has given her the most speedy notice. Very well! very well! proofs thicken upon proofs. Shall I go directly and challenge his lordship?——No—no—that won't do. Watch him closely, that will do better. If I could have a word in private with the maid—Robert, Robert, come hither! Step to my lord Conquest's—but with caution proceed—inquire there for Marmalet, the maid.

*Rob.* I know her, sir.

*Sir John.* He knows her! [*Aside.*

*Rob.* She visits our Tattle, sir.

*Sir John.* Visits our Tattle!—it is a plain case. [*Aside.*] Inquire for that girl, but with caution: tell her to meet me privately; unknown to any body; in the dusk of the evening; in the Bird-Cage Walk, yonder.

*Rob.* I will, sir.

*Sir John.* And don't let Tattle see her. Tattle has engaged her in her mistress's interest. I see how it is. Don't let any of my servants see her: go directly, Robert. Now shall I judge what regard you have for me. But, hark ye: come hither! a word with you. Should it be known that this girl converses with me: should my lady have the least item of it, they will be upon their guard. Let her come wrapped up in darkness: concealed from every observer, with a mask on. Ay, let it be with a mask.

*Rob.* A mask, sir John? Won't that make her be remarked the more!

*Sir John.* No, no; let her come masked; I will make every thing sure. Robert, bring this about for me, and I am your friend for ever.

*Rob.* I will do my endeavour, sir. [*Exit* ROB.

*Sir John.* I'll now take a turn round the Park, and try if I can find the minion this picture belongs to. [*Exit* SIR JOHN.

*Enter* BEVERLEY *and* BELLMONT.

*Bev.* Yes; they had almost surprised us: but

at sight of her father, Belinda gave the word, and away I darted down towards the canal.

*Bel.* Was sir William with him?

*Bev.* Yes; they had been plotting our ruin. But we shall out-officer them, it is to be hoped.

*Bel.* Yes; and it is also to be feared that we shall not.

*Bev.* Hey! you alarm me: no new mine sprung?

*Bel.* Nothing but the old story. Our wise fathers are determined. At the turning of yonder corner, they came both full tilt upon Clarissa and me.

*Bev.* Well; and how! what passed?

*Bel.* Why, they were scarcely civil to your sister. Sir William fixed his surly eye upon me for some time: at last he began: 'You will run 'counter to my will, I see: you will be ever dang-'ling after that girl: but Mr Blandford and I have 'agreed upon the match:' and, then, he peremptorily commanded me to take my leave of Clarissa, and fix my heart upon your Belinda.

*Bev.* And did you so?

*Bel.* And did you so? How can you ask such a question? Sir, says I, I must see the lady home; and off I marched, arm in arm, with her, my father bawling after me, and I bowing to him, 'Sir, 'your humble servant, I wish you a good morn-'ing, sir.'—He continued calling out: I kissed my hand to him; and so, we made our escape.

*Bev.* And where have you left Clarissa?

*Bel.* At home; at your house.

*Bev.* Well! and do you both continue in the same mind? is to-morrow to be your wedding-day?

*Bel.* Now are you conjuring up a thousand horrid fancies to torment yourself. But don't be alarmed, my dear Beverley. I shall leave you your Belinda, and content myself with the honour of being your brother-in-law.

*Bev.* Sir, the honour will be to me—But uneasy!—ha, ha!——no——no——I am not uneasy, nor shall I ever be so again.

*Bel.* Keep that resolution, if you can. Do you dine with us at the club?

*Bev.* With all my heart: I'll attend you.

*Bel.* That's right; let us turn towards the Mall, and saunter there till dinner.

*Bev.* No; I can't go that way yet. I must inquire how Belinda does, and what her father said to her. I have not seen her since we parted in the morning.

*Bel.* And now, according to custom, you will make her an apology for leaving her, when there was an absolute necessity for it, and you'll fall to an explanation of circumstances, that require no explanation at all, and refine upon things, and torment yourself and her into the bargain.

*Bev.* Nay, if you begin with your raillery, I am off: your servant; *a l'honneur.* [*Exit* BEV.

*Bel.* [*Alone.*] Poor Beverley! Though a handsome fellow, and of agreeable talents, he has such a strange diffidence in himelf, and such a solicitude to please, that he is every moment of his life most ingeniously elaborating his own uneasiness.

*Enter* SIR JOHN.

*Sir John.* Not yet, not yet; nobody like it as yet. Ha! who is that hovering about my house? ——If that should be he now!——I'll examine him nearer——Pray, sir—what the devil shall I say?——Pray, sir——

*Bel.* Sir!

*Sir John.* I beg pardon for troubling you, sir; but, pray what o'clock is it by your watch?

*Bel.* By my watch, sir!—I'll let you know in a moment.

*Sir John.* Let me examine him now——

[*Looks at him, and then at the picture.*

*Bel.* Egad, I am afraid my watch is not right: it must be later. [*Looking at his watch.*

*Sir John.* It is not like him.

[*Comparing the picture.*

*Bel.* It does not go, I am afraid.

[*Puts it to his ear.*

*Sir John.* The eye——no!

*Bel.* Why, sir, by my watch it wants a quarter of three.

*Sir John.* It is not he: and yet—no—no—no—I am still to seek.

*Enter* BEVERLEY.

*Bev.* Bellmont! Another word with you.

*Sir John.* Here comes another; they are all swarming about my house.

*Bev.* I have seen her; I have seen Belinda, my boy: she will be with Clarissa in the Park immediately after dinner, you rogue.

*Sir John.* I want to see his face; this may be the original.

*Bev.* Her father has been rating her in his usual manner; but your marriage with my sister will settle every thing.

*Sir John.* I'll walk round him. [*Sings.*] Loll, toll, loll!—[*Looks at him.*]—ha! it has his air. [*Sings.*] Loll, toll, loll,—and it has his eye! Loll toll, loll,—— [*Walks to and fro.*

*Bev.* Prithee, Bellmont, don't be such a dangling lover, but consummate at once, for the sake of your friend.

*Sir John.* It has his nose, for all the world.

*Bel.* Do you spirit your sister up to keep her resolution, and to-morrow puts you out of all pain.

*Sir John.* Loll, toll, loll!—it has his complexion; the same glowing, hot, amorous complexion.

[*Sings, and looks uneasy.*

*Bev.* Who is this gentleman?

*Bel.* An odd fellow he seems to be.

*Sir John.* Loll, toll, loll—it has his shoulders. Loll, toll, loll—Ay, and I fancy the mole upon the cheek, too. I wish I could view him nearer: loll, toll, loll!

*Bel.* He seems mad, I think. Where are his keepers?

*Sir John.* Begging your pardon, sir——Pray [*Looking at the picture.*]—Pray, sir, can you tell whether we shall have a Spanish war?

*Bev.* Not I truly, sir. [*To* BELLMONT.] Here is a politician out of his senses.

*Bel.* He has been talking to me, too: he is too well dressed for a poet.

*Bev.* Not, if he has had a good subscription.

*Sir John.* He has the mole, sure enough. [*Aside.*

*Bev.* Let us step this way, to avoid this impertinent blockhead.

*Sir John.* Ay! he wants to sneak off. Guilt! guilt! conscious guilt! I'll make sure of him. Pray, sir,—I beg your pardon—Is not your name Wildair?

*Bev.* No, sir, Beverly, at your service.

*Sir John.* Have you no relation of that name?

*Bev.* None.

*Sir John.* You are very like a gentleman of that name——a friend of mine, whose picture I have here——Will you give me leave just to——

[*Compares him with the picture.*

*Bev.* An odd adventure this, Bellmont!

*Bel.* Very odd, indeed.

*Bev.* Do you find any likeness, sir?

*Sir John.* Your head a little more that way, if you please. Ay, ay! it is he. Yes, a plain case; this is my man, or rather,—this is my wife's man.

*Bev.* Did you ever know any thing so whimsical?

*Bel.* Never———ha, ha, ha!

*Sir John.* They are both laughing at me. Ay! and I shall be laughed at by the whole town, pointed at, hooted at, and gazed at!

*Bev.* What do I see? 'Sdeath, the setting of that picture is like what I gave to Belinda. Distraction! if it is the same———

[*Drawing near him.*

*Sir John.* He makes his approach, and means, I suppose, to snatch it out of my hand. But I'll prevent him, and so into my pocket it goes. There, lie safe there!

*Bev.* Confusion! he puts it up in a hurry. Will you be so good, sir, as to favour me with a——

*Sir John.* Sir, I wish you a good day.

*Bev.* With a sight of that picture for a moment?

*Sir John.* The picture, sir——Po!——a mere daub.

*Bev.* A motive of curiosity, sir——

*Sir John.* It is not worth your seeing. I wish you a good day.

*Bev.* I shall take it as a favour.

*Sir John.* A paltry thing. I have not a moment to spare; my family is waiting dinner. Sir, I wish you a good morning.

[*Runs into his house.*

*Bev.* Death and fire! Bellmont, my picture!

*Bel.* Oh! no—no such thing.

*Bev.* But I am sure of it. If Belinda——

*Bel.* What, relapsing into suspicion again!

*Bev.* Sir, I have reason to suspect. She slights me, disdains me, treats me with contempt.

*Bel.* But I tell you, that unhappy temper of yours—Prithee, man, leave teasing yourself, and let us adjourn to dinner.

*Bev.* No, sir; I shan't dine at all. I am not well.

*Bel.* Ridiculous! how can you be so absurd? I'll bett you twenty pounds, that is not your picture.

*Bev.* Done; I take it.

*Bel.* With all my heart; and I'll tell you more; if it be yours, I will give you leave to be as jealous of her as you please. Come, now let us adjourn.

*Bev.* I attend you. In the evening we shall know the truth. If it be that I gave Belinda, she is false, and I am miserable. [*Exeunt.*

SIR JOHN. [*Peeping after them.*]

*Sir John.* There he goes! there he goes! the destroyer of my peace and happiness!——I'll follow him, and make sure that he has given me the right name; and then, my lady Restless, the mine is sprung, and I have done with you for ever. [*Exit.*

## ACT III.

SCENE I.—*The former Scene continues.*

*Enter* BELINDA *and* CLARISSA.

*Belin.* BUT have you really fixed every thing, Clarissa?

*Cla.* Positively, and to-morrow morning makes me his.

*Belin.* To-morrow morning!

*Cla.* Yes, to-morrow morning, I release Mr Bellmont from his fetters, and resign my person to him.

*Belin.* Why, that is what we poor women, after all the victories of our charms, all the triumphs of our beauty, and all the murders of our eyes, must come to at last.

*Cla.* Well, and in that we but imitate the men. Don't we read of their conquering whole kingdoms, and then submitting, at last, to be governed by the vanquished?

*Belin.* Very true, Clarissa; and I don't know but you are a heroine equal in fame to any of them, nay, superior: for your scheme, I take it, is not to unpeople the world.

*Cla.* Prithee, don't talk so wildly. To tell you the truth, now that I have settled the affair, I begin to be alarmed at what I have done.

*Belin.* Oh! dear, dear affectation!

*Cla.* Actually now, positively, I am terrified to death.

*Belin.* To be sure:—our sex must play its tricks, and summon up all its fantastic train of doubts and fears. But courage, my dear; don't be frightened; for the same sex within that heart of yours will urge you on, and never let you be at rest, till you have procured yourself a tyrant for life.

*Cla.* A tyrant, Belinda! I think more generously of Mr Bellmont, than to imagine he will usurp to himself an ill use of his power.

*Belin.* To deal candidly, I am of your opinion. But tell me now, am not I a very good girl, to resign such a man to you?

*Cla.* Why, indeed, I must confess the obligation.

*Belin.* Ay! but to resign him for one whose temper does not promise that I shall live under so mild a government?

*Cla.* How do you mean?

*Belin.* Why, Mr Beverley's strange caprices, suspicions, and unaccountable whimsies, are enough to alarm one upon the brink of matrimony.

*Cla.* Well, I vow I cann't help thinking, Belinda, that you are a little subject to vain surmises and suspicions yourself.

*Belin.* Now you are an insincere girl. You know I am of a temper too generous, too open—

*Cla.* I grant all that; but by this constant repetition of the same doubts, I should not wonder to see you most heartily jealous of him in the end.

*Belin.* Jealous!—Oh Heavens!—jealous indeed!

*Cla.* Well, I say no more. As to my brother. here he comes, and let him speak for himself.

*Enter* BEVERLEY *and* BELLMONT.

*Bel.* Well argued, sir: you will have it your own way, and I give up the point. Ladies, your most obedient. I hope we have not transgressed our time?

*Belin.* Not in the least; you are both very exact. True as the dial to the sun.

*Bev.* [*In a peevish manner.*] Although it be not shone upon.

*Belin.* Although it be not shone upon, Mr Beverley! why with that dejected air, pray, sir?

*Bel.* There again now! you two are going to commence wrangling lovers once more. Apropos, Belinda——now, Beverley, you shall see——be so good, madam, as to let me see this gentleman's picture.

*Belin.* His picture! what can you want it for? You shall have it. [*Searching her pocket.*

*Bel.* Now, Beverley, do you confess how wrong you have been?

*Bev.* Why, I begin to see my mistake. Say not a word to her: she'll never forgive me, if you discover my infirmity. [*Apart.*

*Belin.* It is not in that pocket: it must be here. [*Searches.*

*Bel.* You have been sad company, on account of this strange suspicion.

*Bev.* I own it; let it drop; say no more. [*Aside.*

*Belin.* Well, I protest and vow—Where can it be? Come, gentlemen, this is some trick of yours: you have it among ye. Mr Bellmont, Mr Beverley, pray return it to me.

*Bev.* No, madam, it is no trick of ours. [*Angrily.*

*Belin.* As I live and breathe, I have not got it!

*Bev.* What think you now, Bellmont?

*Bel.* She'll find it presently, man; don't shew your humours: be upon your guard; you'll undo yourself else. Clarissa, shall you and I saunter down this walk?

*Cla.* My brother seems out of humour: what is the matter now?

*Bel.* I'll tell you presently: let us step this way. [*Exit with* CLARISSA.

*Belin.* Well, I declare, I don't know what is come of this odious picture.

*Bev.* This odious picture! how she expresses it!

*Belin.* You may look grave, sir, but I have it not.

*Bev.* I know you have not, madam; and though you may imagine——

*Belin.* Imagine! what do you mean?—Imagine what?

*Bev.* Don't imagine that I am to be led blindfold as you please.

*Belin.* Heavens! with what gravity that was said!

*Bev.* I am not to be deceived; I can see all around me.

*Belin.* You can?

*Bev.* I can, madam.

*Belin.* Well, and how do you like your prospect?

*Bev.* Oh! you may think to pass it off in raillery: but that picture I have this day seen in the hands of another; in the hands of the very gentleman to whom you gave it.

*Belin.* To whom I gave it?—have a care, sir; this is another symptom of your jealous temper.

*Bev.* But I tell you, madam, I saw it in his hand.

*Belin.* Who is the gentleman? What's his name?

*Bev.* His name, madam?—'sdeath! I forgot that circumstance. Though I don't know his name, madam, I know his person, and that is sufficient.

*Belin.* Go on, sir; you are making yourself very ridiculous in this matter—Ha, ha!——

*Bev.* You may laugh, madam; but it is no laughing matter, that let me assure you.

*Belin.* Oh! brave—follow your own notions. I gave it away: I have scorned your present. Ha, ha! Poor Mr Beverley!

*Bev.* I don't doubt you, madam: I believe you did give it away.

*Belin.* Mighty well, sir; think so, if you please. I shall leave you to your own imagination: it will find wherewithal to entertain you. Ha, ha! The self-tormenting Beverley! Yonder I see Clarissa and Mr Bellmont. I will join them this instant. Your servant, sir. Amuse yourself with your own fancies—Ha, ha! [*Exit.*

*Bev.* Plague and distraction! I cannot tell what to make of this. She carries it off with an air of confidence. And yet, if that be my picture, which I saw this morning, then it is plain I am only laughed at by her. The dupe of her caprice! I cannot bear it.

*Enter* BELINDA, CLARISSA, *and* BELLMONT.

*Belin.* Observe him now. Let us walk by him, without taking any notice. Let us talk of any thing rather than be silent. What a charming evening!

*Cla.* And how gay the Park looks!—mind the gentleman!

*Belin.* Take no notice; I beg you won't. Suppose we were to shew ourselves in the Mall, Clarissa, and walk our charms there, as the French express it?

*Bel.* Ha, ha!—Beverley!—what, fixed in contemplation!

*Bev.* Sir, I beg—I choose to be alone, sir.

*Bel. Belin.* and *Cla.* Ha, ha, ha!

*Bev.* Pshaw! impertinent. [*Aside.*

*Belin.* Oh! for Heaven's sake, let us indulge the gentleman. Let us leave him to himself, and his ill-humours. This way, this way. You shall go home, and have your tea with me. Mr Beverley, [*She kisses her hand to him at some distance, and laughs at him.*] your servant, sir: I wish you a good evening. A l'honneur.

[*Exeunt.*

*Bev.* Distraction! you may retire. Your servant, madam. Racks and torment! this is too much. If she has parted with the picture; if she has given it away—but she may only have lent it, or she may have lost it. But, even that, even that is an injury to me. Why should she not be more careful of it? I will know the bottom of it. That's the house the gentleman went into. I'll wait on him directly: but they are watching me. I'll walk another way, to elude their observation. Ay, ay, you may laugh, madam, but I shall find out all your artifices. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*An Apartment at* SIR JOHN'S.

*Enter* LADY RESTLESS, *meeting* ROBERT.

*Lady Rest.* Where are you going, sir?

*Rob.* To my master's room, madam, to leave these clothes there.

*Lady Rest.* Stay, sir; stay a moment. [*Searches the pockets.*] Where are his letters?

*Rob.* Letters, my lady! I know of no letters: I never touch his pockets.

*Lady Rest.* I guessed you would say so. You are sir John's agent; the conductor of his schemes.

*Rob.* I, madam?

*Lady Rest.* You, sir, you are his secretary for love-affairs.

*Rob.* I collect his rents, my lady, and——

*Lady Rest.* Oh! sir, I am not to be deceived; I know you are my enemy.

*Rob.* Enemy, my lady! I am sure, as far as a poor servant dare, I am a friend to both.

*Lady Rest.* Then, tell me honestly; have not you conveyed his letters out of my way?

*Rob.* Indeed, madam, not I.

*Lady Rest.* Then he has done it himself.—— Artful man! I never can find a line after him. Where did you go for him this morning?

*Rob.* This morning?

*Lady Rest.* Ay, this morning. I know he sent you somewhere. Where was it?

*Rob.* Upon my word, my lady——

*Lady Rest.* Very well, sir: I see how it is.—You are all bent against me. I shall never be at rest till every servant in this house is of my own choosing. Is Tattle come home, yet?

*Rob.* No, madam.

*Lady Rest.* Where can she be gadding?—— Hark! I hear a rap at the door. This is sir John,

I suppose. Stay, let me listen. I don't know that voice. Who can it be? Some of his libertine company, I suppose.

*Rob.* My lady, if you will believe me———

*Lady Rest.* Hold your tongue, man: let me hear. You want to hinder me, do you?

*Rob.* Indeed, madam——

*Lady Rest.* Hold your tongue, I say; won't you hold your tongue? Go about your business, sir, go about your business. What does he say? [*Listening.*] I can't hear a word. Who is below there?

*Enter* TATTLE, *with a capuchin on.*

*Lady Rest.* So, Mrs Tattle, who is that at the door?

*Tat.* A gentleman, madam, speaking to William.

*Lady Rest.* And where have you been, mistress? How dare you go out, without my leave?

*Tat.* Dear my lady, don't be angry with me. I was so terrified about what happened in the morning, and your ladyship was in such a perilous taking about it, that I went to desire Mrs Marmalet would justify herself and me.

*Lady Rest.* Oh! very well, Mrs Busy-Body. You have been there, have you? You have been to frame a story among yourselves, have you, and to hinder me from discovering? But I'll go to my lady Conquest myself. I have had no answer to my letter, and 'tis you have occasioned it. Thanks to your meddling!

*Tat.* Dear my lady, if you will but give me leave: I have been doing you the greatest piece of service. I believe, in my conscience, there is something in what you suspect about sir John.

*Lady Rest.* Do you? why? how?

*Tat.* I have seen Mrs Marmalet, and I have made such a discovery!

*Lady Rest.* Have you, Tattle? Well! What? speak, tell me; what is it?

*Tat.* Robert has been there, madam, with a message from sir John, who wants to see her in the evening; and he has desired———

*Lady Rest.* Blessings on you, Tattle: well; go on: tell me all.

*Enter a Servant.*

What do you want, sir? Who called you? Go about your business.

*Ser.* Madam, there is a gentleman wants to speak with sir John about a picture.

*Lady Rest.* I had forgot me. It was he rapped at the door, I suppose?

*Ser.* Yes, madam!

*Lady Rest.* About a picture! This may lead to some further discovery. Desire the gentleman to step up stairs. [*Exit Servant.*] And so, Tattle, Robert has been there?

*Tat.* Yes, madam.

*Lady Rest.* And sir John wants to speak with Marmalet in the evening, and has desired—Oh! the base man! what has he desired? Now he is discovered. What has he desired?

*Tat.* He has desired, madam—the poor girl does not know what to make of it—She is very sober and discreet, I assure you, madam—he has desired, madam, in the dusk of the evening, that Mrs Marmalet will come, and——

*Lady Rest.* How unlucky this is? The gentleman is coming. I have a mind not to see him: and yet I will, too. Tattle, do you step to my room; as soon as he goes, I will come to you, and hear all in private. [*Exit* TATTLE.] In the dusk of the evening he desires to see her: abandoned wretch!

*Enter* BEVERLEY.

*Bev.* Madam——— [*Bows.*

*Lady Rest.* Pray, walk in, sir. [*Curtsies.*

*Bev.* I wanted a word with sir John Restless, madam.

*Lady Rest.* About a picture?

*Bev.* Yes, madam, a picture I had given to a lady; and, however insignificant in itself, it is to me of the highest consequence, as it may conduce to the explanation of an affair, in which the happiness of my life is concerned.

*Lady Rest.* The lady is young?

*Bev.* She is.

*Lady Rest.* And handsome?

*Bev.* In the highest degree; my heart is devoted to her; and I have reason to suspect, that a present from me is not of so much value as I could wish. To be plain, madam, I imagine she has given the picture away.

*Lady Rest.* As I guessed: my suspicions are just.

*Bev.* Your suspicions, madam! Did you suspect it was given to sir John Restless?

*Lady Rest.* What I know of the matter shall be no secret to you. Pray, sir, have you spoke to the lady on this subject?

*Bev.* I have, but she knows nothing of the matter; she has lost it, she has mislaid it, she can give no account of it.

*Lady Rest.* She has given it to sir John, sir, to shew him how little she regards it.

*Bev.* Given it to him?

*Lady Rest.* Given it to him, sir!

*Bev.* Then, I have no further doubt.

*Lady Rest.* Of what?

*Bev.* Madam, I would not hurt your peace of mind; I would not give you an impression of sir John, that may affect his character.

*Lady Rest.* Oh! sir, stand upon no ceremony with him; an injurious, false, licentious man!

*Bev.* Is that his character?

*Lady Rest.* Notoriously: he has made me miserable; false to his marriage vows, and warm in the pursuit of his pleasures abroad! I have not deserved it of him. Oh! sir John! sir John! [*Cries.*

*Bev.* She weeps; the case is plain, and I am undone.

*Lady Rest.* Pray, sir, what is the lady's name?

*Bev.* Belinda Blandford.

*Lady Rest.* Belinda Blandford! So far I have discovered. [*Aside.*

*Bev.* Pray, madam, have you ever seen her?

*Lady Rest.* Seen her, sir! yes, I have seen too much of her.

*Bev.* You alarm me, madam! You have seen nothing improper, I hope?

*Lady Rest.* I don't know what you call improper. But, pray, what ought one to think of a young lady thrown familiarly into a gentleman's arms?

*Bev.* In his arms, madam! sir John's arms!

*Lady Rest.* In sir John's! in open day; in the Park; under my very window; most familiarly, wantonly reclining in his very arms.

*Bev.* Oh, Heavens!

*Lady Rest.* He clasping her with equal freedom round the waist!

*Bev.* False, false Belinda!

*Lady Rest.* Both interchanging fond, mutual glances.

*Bev.* Oh, madam! the whole is come to light, and I thank you for the discovery, though I am ruined by it. But give me leave: is all this certain?

*Lady Rest.* There can be no doubt, sir; these eyes beheld their amorous meeting.

*Bev.* Saw it yourself?

*Lady Rest.* Yes, all, all, sir. Sir John, I know, is capable of any thing, and you know what to think of Belinda, as you call her.

*Bev.* I now know what to think: I have long had reason to suspect.

*Lady Rest.* You have, sir? Then, the whole affair is plain enough.

*Bev.* It is so. I meant an honourable connection with her;——but———

*Lady Rest.* But you see, sir!

*Bev.* Yes, I see, madam———you are sure sir John has the picture?

*Lady Rest.* Sure, sir! it is your own picture. I had it in my hands but a moment, and he flew with ardour, with impetuosity, like a fury flew to it, and recovered it from me. What could be the meaning of all that violence?

*Bev.* The meaning is too plain.

*Lady Rest.* And, then, sir, when charged and pressed home with his guilt, most hypocritically, he pretended to believe it the portrait of some favourite of mine. But you know, sir, how false that insinuation is.

*Bev.* Oh, madam! I can justify you—Ha, ha! that is but a poor evasion, and confirms me the more in my opinion. I return you many thanks, madam, and humbly take my leave.

*Lady Rest.* Sir, I am glad you thought it prudent to speak to me about this affair. If any other circumstances come to your knowledge, I shall take it as a favour if you will acquaint me with them; for, indeed, sir, I am very unhappy.

*Bev.* I am in gratitude bound to you, and my best services you shall ever command. Madam, your most obedient. Oh, Belinda! Belinda! [*Exit.*

*Lady Rest.* Now, sir John, how will you be able to confront these stubborn facts? You are now seen through all your disguises; detected in your true colours. Tattle within here has fresh proofs against you; and your man Robert, and the whole house. I must hear Tattle's story this very moment. [*Exit.*

## SCENE III.—*The Park.*

*Enter* SIR JOHN.

*Sir John.* Yes, yes; he told me his name honestly enough. Beverley is his name; and my lady Restless, now your gallant, your paramour is known. What do I see? By all my wrongs, the very man again, coming out of my house before my face!

BEVERLEY *and* ROBERT *come out of the house.*

*Bev.* There, friend, there is something for your trouble.

*Rob.* I thank your honour.

*Sir John.* He bribes my servant, too; and the fellow takes it! Both in their trade—both in their trade!

*Bev.* Could I have suspected her of such treachery? As I could wish: I take that to be sir John Restless.

*Sir John.* This is he to whom I have so many obligations. [*Aside.*

*Bev.* Well encountered: your servant, sir.

*Sir John.* My servant, sir! I rather take it you are my lady's servant.

*Bev.* You, if I don't mistake, sir John, are a pretty general servant of the ladies. Pray, sir, have not you a picture of mine in your pocket?

*Sir John.* That, I suppose, you have heard from my good lady within there?

*Bev.* Yes, sir; and I have heard a great deal more from my lady.

*Sir John.* I don't in the least doubt it.

*Bev.* Sir, I do not mean to work myself up into any choler about such a trifling bauble. Since the lady has thought proper to give it you——

*Sir John.* Do her justice, pray; she did not give it; so far she was true to you. I took it from her, sir.

*Bev.* Took it from her! That shews he is upon easy terms. [*Aside.*] It is of no consequence to me; I despise it, and you are welcome to make what use you will of it. This I will only say, that you have made me miserable.

*Sir John.* What, I have interrupted your happiness?

*Bev.* You have.

*Sir John.* And, no doubt, you think it cruel of me so to do?

*Bev.* Call it by what name you will: you have ruined me with the woman I doted on to distraction.

*Sir John.* A candid declaration! And so, sir, you doted on her, and never reflected that you were doing me the least injury?

*Bev.* Injury!—I promise you, sir, I will never injure you again, and so you may set your mind at peace. I here declare, I never will hold farther intercourse with her.

*Sir John.* Oh! that is too late for me. I have now done with her myself. You are very welcome to the lady, sir! you may take her home with you as soon as you please. I forswear her; and so I shall tell my lady this moment. [*Going.*

*Bev.* That will make her ladyship happy, no doubt.

*Sir John.* Yes, I dare say you know it will.

*Bev.* She told me as much, sir.

*Sir John.* She did!—why, then, you may depend I shall keep my word, and my lady may depend upon it, too. And that, I suppose, will make you both happy, sir?

*Bev.* My happiness is past recalling: I disdain all further connection with the lady.

*Sir John.* Ay, you are tired of her?

*Bev.* I loath her, detest her, hate her, as much as I ever loved her.

*Sir John.* And so do I, too, I assure you. And so I shall tell my lady this very instant. Your servant, sir. If I can find proof sufficient, you shall hear of me, I promise you. [*Exit* SIR JOHN.

*Bev.* I see how it is: she has been connected with him, till she has palled his very appetite. Sdeath. I'll seek her this moment, upbraid her with her falsehood, and then—by heavens! I shall do it with regret. I feel a tug at my heart-string: but, were I to be torn piece-meal, this shall be our last interview!

*Enter* BELINDA, CLARISSA, *and* BELLMONT.

*Belin.* Alas-a-day! poor soul! see where he takes his melancholy walk! Did not I tell you, Clarissa, that the stricken deer could not quit this place?

*Cla.* And did not I tell you, Belinda, that you could not keep away from the pursuit?

*Bel.* Pray, madam, do you want to be in at the death, or do you mean to bring the poor thing to life again?

*Belin.* I! what do you mean? You brought me this way.

*Cla.* Well! if that is the case, we had as good go home, for I want my tea.

*Belin.* Po! not yet: it is not six o'clock.

*Bel. and Cla.* Ha, ha!

*Belin.* What do ye laugh at?

*Cla.* At you, my dear: why, 'tis past seven. Oh! Belinda, you are the stricken deer, I find.

*Belin.* Who, I? Not I, truly; I———

*Cla.* My dear Belinda, I know you. Come, we will do the good-natured thing by you, and leave you to yourselves. Success attend you. Come, Mr Bellmont. [*Exeunt.*

*Belin.* Thyrsis, a youth of the inspired train,
Fair Sacharissa loved, but loved in vain.

*Bev.* Po! po! [*Looking peevishly at her.*

*Belin.* Won't you know me, sir?

*Bev.* Yes, madam, I know you: it is but too true, that I know you.

*Belin.* Still gloomy and discontented! Come, come, under pain of my displeasure, brighten up this moment.

*Bev.* Silly, idle, ridiculous!

*Belin.* Take care of what you are about. When I proclaim a pardon, you had better embrace it, than reduce yourself to the necessity of sighing, vowing, protesting, writing to me, following me up and down, kneeling at my feet, imploring forgiveness———

*Bev.* Madam, you will never again see me humbled to that low degree.

*Belin.* Upon my word! ha, ha, ha!

*Bev.* Oh! you may laugh, madam: you have too long imposed upon my fond, easy credulity. But the witchery of your charms is over.

*Belin.* Very well, sir! and you are your own man again?

*Bev.* I am, madam; and you may be your own woman again, or any body's woman, or every body's.

*Belin.* You grow rude, sir!

*Bev.* It is time to wave all ceremony, and to tell you plainly, that your falsehood———

*Belin.* My falsehood, sir!

*Bev.* Your falsehood!——I know the whole story. I loved you once, Belinda; tenderly loved you, and, by Heaven, I swear it, it is with sorrow, that I can no longer adore you. It is with anguish, that I now bid you an everlasting farewell! [*Going.*

*Belin.* Explain, sir: what action of my life?

*Bev.* Your prudence forsook you at last. It was too glaring; too manifest in open day.

*Belin.* Too manifest in open day! Mr Beverley, I shall hate you.

*Bev.* All circumstances inform against you: my picture given away!

*Belin.* Insolent, provoking, wrong-headed man!—I'll confirm him in his error, to torment him as he deserves. [*Aside.*] Well, sir, what if I chose to give it away? I am mistress of my own actions, am I not?

*Bev.* I know that, madam: I know that; and I am not uneasy, madam.

*Belin.* So it seems—ha, ha!—why do you sigh, poor man?

*Bev.* Sigh, madam! I disdain it.

*Belin.* I am glad of it; now, that is so manly! but pray, watch yourself well, hold a guard upon all your passions, otherwise they will make a fool of you again.

*Bev.* And do you take care you don't expose yourself again. Lolling familiarly in a gentleman's arms—

*Belin.* How?

*Bev.* Here, in the Park; in open day.

*Belin.* What can this mean?

*Bev.* He inviting you to his house!

*Belin.* Oh! I understand him now; when I fainted, all this was. I'll encourage his notion, to be revenged of his waspish temper. [*Aside.*] Well, sir, and what then?

*Bev.* What then?

*Belin.* Ha, ha! poor Mr Beverley! why should you be in a piteous taking, because I, in the gaiety of my heart, give away a picture I set no value on, or walk with a gentleman I do set a value on, or lean on his arm, or make the man happy, by letting him draw on my glove?

*Bev.* Or draw off your glove, madam?

*Belin.* Ay, or draw it off?

*Bev.* Yes, or—or—or take any other liberties?

*Belin.* Very true.

*Bev.* You may make light of it, madam, but—

*Belin.* Why, yes, a generous temper always makes light of the favours it confers.

*Bev.* And some generous tempers will make light of any thing to gratify their inclinations. Madam, I have done: I abjure you, eternally abjure you. [*Going.*

*Belin.* Bon voyage!

*Bev.* Don't imagine that you will see me again.

*Belin.* Adieu.——Well, what, coming again? Why do you linger so? [*Repeats affectedly,*

Thus, o'er the dying lamp, th' unsteady flame
Hangs quivering to a point!

*Bev.* With what an air she carries it! I have but this one thing more to tell you: by Heaven I loved you, to excess I loved you! such is my weakness, I shall never quite forget you. I shall be glad, if, hereafter, I hear of your happiness, and, if I can, no dishonour shall befall you.

*Belin.* Ha, ha!—Well, my obliging, generous Don Quixotte, go and fight windmills, and castles in the air, and a thousand phantoms of your own creation, for your Dulcinea's sake! ha, ha, ha!

*Bev.* Confusion! Take notice, madam, that this is the last time of my troubling you.

*Belin.* I shall expect you to-morrow morning.

*Bev.* No, never; by Heaven, never!

*Belin.* Exactly at ten; your usual hour.

*Bev.* May I perish at your feet, if ever again—

*Belin.* Oh, brave! but remember ten; kneeling, beseeching, imploring, your hand upon your heart—'Belinda, won't you forgive me?'

*Bev.* Damnation!——I have done: I here bid you an eternal adieu!—farewell for ever!

[*Exit* BEV.

*Belin.* I shall wait breakfast for you. Ha, ha! poor Beverley! he cannot command his temper. But, in spite of all his faults, I love him still. What the poet says of great wits, may be applied to all jealous lovers:

——To madness sure they're near allied;
And thin partitions do their bounds divide.

[*Exit.*

## ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*An apartment in* BEVERLEY'S *house.*

*Enter* BEVERLEY.

*Bev.* So, Belinda, I have escaped your snares: I have recovered my freedom. And yet, if she had not proved false, what a treasure of love and happiness had I in store! her beauty—po!—no more of her beauty: it is external, superficial, the mere result of features and complexion. A deceitful syren, to draw the unwary into a dream of happiness, and then wake him into wonder at the storms and tempests that gather round him! I have done with her; I'll think no more of her. Oh, Belinda, Belinda!

*Enter* BRUSH.

*Brush.* Please your honour——

*Bev.* She, that in every part of life seemed so amiable.

*Brush.* Sir——

*Bev.* Under so fair a mask to wear such loose designs!

*Brush.* What is he musing upon?—Sir——

*Bev.* I have done with her for ever; ay, for ever. [*Hums a tune.*]—I swear for ever—[*Sings.*]——Are you there, Brush?

*Brush.* Yes, your honour: here is a letter.

*Bev.* So unforeseen, so unexpected a discovery!—Well, well, well!——What did you say, Brush?

*Brush.* A letter for your honour, sir.

*Bev.* Give it to me another time. [*Walks about.*] I'll not make myself uneasy about her.

*Brush.* I fancy your honour will be glad to have it now?

*Bev.* What did you say?

*Brush.* It is a letter from Madam Belinda, sir.

*Bev.* Belinda! I won't read it: take it away.

*Brush.* Hey, which way is the wind now? Some quarrel, I suppose: but the falling out of lovers—Must I take it away, sir?

*Bev.* I have done with her for ever.

*Brush.* Have done with Madam Belinda, sir?

*Bev.* Oh, Brush, she is——but I will not proclaim her shame. No: let me still be tender of her. I will see her no more, Brush, that is all; hear from her no more: she will not wind herself about my heart again. I'll go out of town directly: order my chaise to the door.

*Brush.* Had not you better defer it, till to-morrow morning, sir? Perhaps, then———.

*Bev.* No, no; directly; do as I bid you.

*Brush.* Consider, sir, if your mind should change, the trouble of coming back post-haste—

*Bev.* No, never, I say never: what! to her, who could smile on me, on him, on a thousand? No; she shall know that I am a man, and no longer the dupe of her artifice.

*Brush.* But, sir, you know, that one solitary tear, which, after miserably chaffing for it half an hour together, she will painfully distil from the corner of her eye, will extinguish all this rage, and then———

*Bev.* Po, po! You know nothing of the matter. Go and order the chaise directly.

*Brush.* Yes, sir. I suppose a couple of shirts will be sufficient, sir? You will hardly stay them out.

*Bev.* Pack up all, sir. I shall stay in the country a whole month, if it be necessary.

*Brush.* An entire month, sir?

*Bev.* I am resolved, fixed, and determined; and so do as I have ordered you.—[*Exit* BRUSH.]—So shall I disentangle myself from her entirely, so shall I forget the fondness my foolish heart had conceived for her. I hate her, loath her, pity her, am sorry for her, and love her still. I must expel this weakness: I will think no more of her: and yet—Brush, Brush! I may as well see her letter, too: only to try what her cunning can suggest.

*Enter* BRUSH.

You may as well leave the letter, Brush.

*Brush.* Yes, sir; I thought as much. [*Exit.*

*Bev.* Now, what varnish will she put upon the matter?—[*Reads.*]—'The false gaiety of my 'heart, through which my dear Beverley might 'have read my real anguish, at our last meeting, 'has now subsided. If you will come to me, I 'will not laugh at your inquietude of temper, 'but will clear all your doubts, and shew you 'how much I am, my dearest Beverley, unalter-'ably yours.

'BELINDA BLANDFORD.'

Pshaw! Po! Satisfy my doubts! I have no doubts; I am convinced. These arts prevail no more. Ha, ha!—[*Laughs peevishly.*]—'My dear 'Beverly,'—[*Reads, and tears the letter by degrees.*]—'Real anguish'—ha, ha!—[*Tears another piece.*]—'Inquietude of temper'—[*Another piece.*]—'clear all your doubts'—Po, po, po! ha, ha, ha! damnation! I'll think no more of her—[*Tears another bit.*]—Ha, ha!—'Dearest Bever-'ley'——ha, ha! artful woman!—'unalterably 'yours'——false, false, false!——[*Tears another piece.*]—I'll not make myself uneasy about her. Perfidy, treachery, and ingratitude!—[*Fixes his eye, looks uneasy, and tears the letter in a violent passion.*]

*Enter* CLARISSA *and* BELLMONT.

*Cla.* So, brother.

*Bel.* Beverley!

*Bev.* Sister, your servant; Mr Bellmont, yours.

*Cla.* You seem melancholy, brother?

*Bev.* No, not I. I am in very good spirits.

*Cla.* Ha, ha! My dear brother, that is seen through: you are now upon the rack.

*Bev.* What, about a woman, a false, ungrateful woman!

*Bel.* Whom you still admire.

*Cla.* To whom you'll be upon your knees in five minutes.

*Bev.* You are mistaken: I am going out of town.

*Bel.* But you will take your leave?

*Bev.* I have done that, once for all.

*Cla.* Has not she writ to you?

*Bev.* She has; and there—there you see the effect of her letter. You will see, that I shall maintain a proper firmness on the occasion.

*Bel.* My dear Beverley, have done with this mockery: you but deceive yourself.

*Bev.* You want to deceive me, sir: but it is in vain. What! plead for treachery, for falsehood, for deceit!

*Cla.* No, sir; but for my friend, my lovely friend; for Belinda, for truth, for innocence.

*Bev.* You don't know all the circumstances.

*Cla.* But we do know all the circumstances; and, my dear brother, you have behaved very ill.

*Bev.* Heaven knows, I have not; and yet, Heaven knows, I should be glad to be convinced I have.

*Cla.* I will be your friend, and give you a hint. We women are soft and compassionate in our nature; go to her without delay, fall at her feet, beg her pardon, drop a tear or two, and all will be well again.

*Bev.* Do you come to make sport of me? may contempt and beggary attend me; may all the calamities of life befall me; may shame, confusion, and disquiet of heart for ever sting me, if I hold further intercourse with her; if I do not put her from my thoughts for ever! Did you leave her at home?

*Cla.* We did.

*Bev.* Well, let her stay there: it is of no consequence to me. How did she bear what passed between us?

*Cla.* Like a sweet girl, as she is: she behaved like an angel: I shall love her better than ever for her good humour.

*Bev.* Oh! I don't doubt her good humour.—She has smiles at command, Let her smile, or not smile, 'tis all alike to me. Did she say any thing?

*Cla.* She told us the whole story, and told it in tears, too.

*Bev.* Ay! Them she can command, too! But I have no curiosity about her. Was she in tears?

*Cla.* She was; and wept bitterly. How could you, brother, behave so rashly to so amiable a girl? Have you a pleasure in being the cause of her uneasiness?

*Bev.* I the cause? You wrong me; by Heaven you wrong me! my lady Restless was the cause. She told me such things; she planted daggers in my very heart.

*Cla.* You planted daggers in Belinda's heart. And it was barbarous. What, because a lady has not strength enough to bear up against a father, who is resolved to give her away to another, and because she faints out of excessive tenderness for you, and in that distress meets accidental relief from sir John Restless, at his own door———

*Bev.* How!

*Cla.* And because my lady Restless sees this out of her window, and has a perverse talent of misinterpreting appearances into realities, to her own disadvantage; you must, therefore, fill your head with ungenerous suspicions? Oh! For shame, brother! how could you?

*Bev.* But, is all this true? Is it really the case?

*Bel.* How can you doubt it? You know Belinda too well: it is the case, man.

*Bev.* I should be glad to find it so.

*Cla.* Well! I tell you it is so. How could you think otherwise? You know she has the best heart in the world, and is so nice of honour, that she scorns all falsehood and dissimulation.

*Bel.* Ha, ha! my dear Beverley, you have done the absurdest thing!

*Bev.* Why, if what you say can be made to appear—but, then, she'll never forgive my past behaviour.

*Cla.* Po! You talk, as if you were wholly unlettered in the tempers of women. My dear brother, you know, you men can do what you please with us, when you have once gained an interest in our hearts. Go to her, I say, go to her, and make your peace.

*Bev.* May I depend upon what you say?

*Cla.* You may.

*Bev.* Then I'll fly to her this instant, humble myself to her, and promise, by all my future life, to atone for this brutal injury.

*Enter* BRUSH.

*Brush.* The chaise is at the door, sir.

*Bev.* You may put up again; I shan't go out of town.

*Brush.* No, sir!

*Bev.* No—ha, ha! You may put up, and let me have the chariot directly.

*Brush.* Yes, sir; I knew it would come to this. [*Exit* BRUSH.

*Bev.* But do you think she will forgive me?

*Cla.* She will: love will plead your cause.

*Bev.* My dear sister, I am for ever obliged to you; and, Bellmont, I thank you, too. How could I wrong her so? I shall behold her once again. Is the chariot ready? I cannot help laughing at my own rashness. I won't stay for it; I am on the wing, my dear Belinda, to implore forgiveness. And so she fainted away in the Park, and my lady Restless saw sir John afford relief? Ha, ha, ha! Whimsical enough.—Ha, ha, ha! What a strange construction her crazy temper put upon it? Ha, ha! How could the woman be so foolish? My dear Belinda, I will fly to you this moment—ha, ha!—[*Going, returns.*]—Sir John shall give me back the picture, and, on my knees, I will once more present it to her.

*Cla.* So, so! you are come to yourself, I find.

*Bel.* I knew it would be so.

*Bev.* She shall have the picture. I'll find sir John directly: and then—ha, ha! how could I be such a madman! ha, ha!—sister, your servant, Bellmont, yours. Ha, ha! what a piece of work has that foolish lady Restless made for us all?

[*Exit singing.*

*Cla.* Let us follow him: I must be present at their reconciliation. [*Exit with* BELLMONT.

SCENE II.—*An apartment at* BELINDA'S.

*Enter* BELINDA

*Belin.* This rash, unaccountable man! how could he entertain such a suspicion! ungrateful Beverley! he almost deserves I should never see him again.—Tippet! I shan't be easy, till I hear from him. Tippet!

*Enter* TIPPET.

Is the servant returned from Mr Beverley's?

*Tip.* Not yet, madam.

*Belin.* I wonder what keeps him. I am upon thorns till I see the dear, ungenerous man, and explain every thing to him. Oh, Mr Beverley! how could you treat me so? But I was partly to blame; my lady Restless inflamed his mind, and I should not have trifled with his passion. Is the other servant returned from sir John Restless?

*Tip.* He is, madam.

*Belin.* And what answer?

*Tip.* Sir John will wait upon you himself, madam, directly.

*Belin.* Very well! I must get him to set every thing in its true light, and justify my conduct to Mr Beverley. And yet, the uncertainty of Beverley's temper alarms me strangely. His eternal suspicions! but there is nothing in that: my future conduct, my regard for him, will cure that disease, and then——

*Tip.* I dare be sworn it will, madam.

*Belin.* Yes, I think it will: when he knows

me better, he will learn to think generously of me. On my part, I think I can be sure he will meet with nothing but open, unsuspecting love.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* Sir John Restless, madam.

*Belin.* Shew him in. Tippet, do you leave the room.

*Enter* SIR JOHN.

*Sir John.* In compliance with your commands, madam——

*Belin.* I am obliged to you, sir, for the trouble you have been pleased to give yourself. A particular circumstance has happened in your family, to my utter disquiet.

*Sir John.* Madam, there have happened things in my family, to my utter disquiet, too.

*Belin.* I am sorry for that, sir. I have been made quite unhappy, and must beg, as it is in your power, that you will be kind enough to remove the cause of my uneasiness.

*Sir John.* Whatever I can do, you may command.

*Belin.* Sir, I thank you, and must tell you, that your lady has done me the most irreparable injury.

*Sir John.* She has done the same to me. My injuries are irreparable, too. But how has she injured you, madam?

*Belin.* She has ruined me, sir, with the man I love to distraction.

*Sir John.* Now, here something else will come to light. [*Aside.*]—How, how has she done that, madam?

*Belin.* She has entirely drawn off his affections from me.

*Sir John.* And fixed them upon herself, I suppose?

*Belin.* I don't say that, sir.

*Sir John.* But I dare say it; and I believe it.

*Belin.* Pardon me, sir, I don't charge the lady with any thing of that kind. But she has unaccountably taken it into her head to be jealous of me.

*Sir John.* Jealous of you!

*Belin.* Her ladyship saw the little offices of civility I received from you this morning; she misunderstood every thing, it seems, and has told the gentleman, with whom I was engaged in a treaty of marriage, that improper freedoms have passed between us.

*Sir John.* Artifice! artifice! her usual policy, madam, to cover her own libertine ways.

*Belin.* I don't mean to say any thing harsh of the lady. But you know what foundation there is for this, and I hope will do me justice.

*Sir John.* Oh! madam, to the world, to the wide world I'll justify you. I will wait upon the gentleman. Who is he, madam? what's his name?

*Belin.* Beverley, sir.

*Sir John.* Beverley!

*Belin.* Yes, sir; you seem surprised. Do you know him, sir?

*Sir John.* Yes, yes, I know him; and he shall know me: my resentment he shall feel; he shall be answerable to me.

*Belin.* Answerable to you!

*Sir John.* To me, madam. I told you at first this was her scheme to shelter herself; and he, I suppose, is combined with her to give this turn to the affair, and to charge me with infidelity. But you, madam, can witness for me.

*Belin.* I can, sir: but can Mr Beverley be capable of a dishonourable action?

*Sir John.* That point is clear enough. He has injured me in the highest degree, destroyed my happiness.

*Belin.* How, sir! are you sure of this?

*Sir John.* He has given her his picture; I caught her with her eyes rivetted to it; I heard her admiration, her praises of it; her wishes, that she had been married to such a man. I saw her print a thousand kisses on it; and, in the very fact, I wrested it out of her hand.

*Belin.* If I imagined him capable of what you say, I should scarcely be willing to join myself to him for life. Quarrel with me about his picture, and at the same time give it to another!

*Sir John.* Lady Restless had the picture. Without doubt, you must be very happy with a man of his gallantry.

*Belin.* Happy, sir! I should be miserable; distracted; I should break my heart. But do you think you have sufficient proof?

*Sir John.* I have seen him coming out of my house since, clandestinely, shunning every observant eye, with the characters of guilt in his face; and all the discourse I had with him, served only to convince me the more.

*Belin.* Abandoned wretch! was this the love he professed for me? Sir, I have only to hope you will vindicate me in this matter. I commend myself to your honour, and I thank you for this favour.

*Sir John.* Our evidences will mutually speak for each other, and confound their dark designs. Madam, I take my leave.

*Belin.* Sir, your most obedient.

*Sir John.* The gentleman shall feel my indignation.

*Belin.* You cannot treat him too severely.

*Sir John.* I will expose him, I promise you. Madam, your humble servant. [*Exit.*

*Belin.* Oh! Mr Beverley, could I have imagined this? False! false man! and yet, how shall I forget him? but I will make an effort, though it pierce me to the quick. I will tear him from my heart. This moment I will write to him, and forbid him to see me more. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*The Park.*

*Enter* SIR JOHN.

*Sir John.* If I can procure sufficient evidence, I shall bring the matter to a divorce, and make an example of them all. Would Marmalet were come! this is her time to a moment. If I can worm the secret out of her—Is not that she, yonder?—Not quite daylight enough to distinguish; but I think I perceive a person masked. Hist! hist!—Mrs Marmalet—she comes this way: it is she. Mrs Marmalet, your servant.

*Enter a Person masked.*

You are very good, Mrs Marmalet———

*Mask.* Bless my heart, I am scared out of my senses!

*Sir John.* What's the matter, pray? what's the matter?

*Mask.* Oh, sir! I tremble like a leaf. I was accosted in a rude manner by some gentleman yonder; I can't stay here, let us go into your house, sir; I beg you will.

*Sir John.* My house? Would not any other house do as well?

*Mask.* Oh! no, sir; not for the world.

*Sir John.* Why, my wife is not at home, and so I think I may venture: not but I had rather it were elsewhere.

*Mask.* Indeed, sir John, I am frightened out of my senses. You will do me a favour, if you will take me into the house.

*Sir John.* Say no more: it shall be so. Robert!———

*Rob.* Is that sir John? [*Opening the door.*

*Sir John.* Your lady is not at home, Robert, is she?

*Rob.* No, sir.

*Sir John.* Then do you go in, and take care that nobody see Mrs Marmalet with me. Come, I'll shew you the way. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—SIR JOHN'S *house.*

*Enter* TATTLE, *and* BEVERLEY.

*Tat.* [*As she enters.*] Ay, poor lady! she is unfortunate, indeed; and, poor gentleman! he is as jealous as my lady to the full. There has been a deal to do about the picture you mention, sir.

*Bev.* That will be explained presently: I'll wait till he comes home. I can't possibly go, without speaking to him.

*Tat.* Indeed, you had better not stay, sir. You don't consider the mischief your being in the house may occasion.

*Bev.* Mischief! how do you mean?

*Tat.* Lord, sir! I would not have you stay for the world: I would not indeed. You can call again in an hour, sir, and you'll certainly find him at home then. Bless my heart, sir!—I fancy that's his voice. Do, dear sir! you'll be the ruin of my lady, if he sees you here, sir, waiting in his house: he'll be persuaded you come after my lady; the world will never beat it out of his head.

*Bev.* But I shall give him to understand——

*Tat.* He won't understand any thing. Oh lud! oh lud! he's coming up: I'll run and look. [*Exit.*

*Bev.* What a flurry the woman is in! a foolish jade! I must speak with him now.

*Tat.* [*Entering.*] It is he, as I am alive, sir! and there is a woman in a mask with him.

*Bev.* A woman in a mask! Zoons, if that should be Belinda! my mind misgives me strangely! [*Aside.*

*Tat.* Do, dear sir: you look like a good-natured gentleman; let me hide you out of the way, sir. You would not be the destruction of a poor servant.

*Bev.* A mask coming home with him! I must know who that is. I won't leave the house without knowing. If I could conceal myself—have you any private place, Mrs Tattle?

*Tat.* That is the very thing I mean, sir. Let me conceal you in that closet, till he passes through this room. He never stays long here. It won't take you two minutes. Do, sweet sir, I'll down on my knees to you.

*Bev.* I must know who it is. Come, dispose of me as you will. If this should be Belinda! [*Exit.*

*Tat.* Heavens bless you, sir, for this goodness! I'll lock the door, to make sure work of it. I was never so frightened in my life. [*Exit.*

*Enter* SIR JOHN, *and a person masked.*

*Sir John.* Mrs Marmalet, I am obliged to you for this favour. I wanted a word or two with you.

*Mask.* So Robert informed me, sir.

*Sir John.* Did he tell you my business?

*Mask.* No, sir.

*Sir John.* Look ye, then: if you will gratify me in what I shall ask, you may command any thing. Now you may be uncovered.

*Mask.* La! sir—I hear a noise: I am afraid somebody's coming: I shall be seen.

*Sir John.* Hush! no: there's nobody. If you will indulge me on this occasion, I am yours for ever. Here, here is a purse of money for you.

*Mask.* But if this should come to the knowledge of your lady, I am ruined and undone.

*Sir John.* No, no: I'll take care of you.

*Mask.* Will you, sir?

*Sir John.* I will. But come; let me remove this from your face.

*Mask.* But somebody may come.

*Sir John.* I'll lock the door. There, now, we are safe.

*Mask.* But in a little time you'll make up all quarrels with your lady; and I shall be ruined.

*Sir John.* No, no; never fear; I shall never be reconciled to her: I hate her; I detest her.

*Lady Rest.* Do you so, sir? [*Unmasking.*] Now, sir John, what can you say now, sir?

*Sir John.* My lady Restless! Confusion! what shall I say?

*Lady Rest.* Oh, sir John! sir John! what evasion have you now, sir? Can you deny your guilt any longer?

*Sir John.* This is unlucky! That villain Robert has betrayed me. I can't explain myself to her now. Try what soothing will do.———My lady Restless, if you will but have patience, this matter shall be explained.

*Lady Rest.* Explained, sir?

*Sir John.* Yes, my dear, explained; and——

*Lady Rest.* My dear, too!—the assurance of you!

*Sir John.* I say, my dear; for I still regard you; and this was all done to—to—cure you of your jealousy; all done to cure you of your jealousy.

*Lady Rest.* A fine way you have taken!

*Sir John.* Yes, yes; and so you will see presently: all to convince you how groundless your suspicions are; and then we shall live very happy together.

*Lady Rest.* Ay!

*Sir John.* I have no further suspicions of you. I see my error, and I want you to see your's. Ha, ha!—I have no suspicions——That will put her off her guard. [*Aside.*] My dear, compose your spirits, and———

*Lady Rest.* And do you think to deny every thing, even in the face of conviction? Base, base man! I'll go this moment and write to my brother.

*Sir John.* Now, you talk wildly. This is all raving: you make yourself very ridiculous. You do, indeed. I had settled all this on purpose, and contrived that it should come to your ears, and then I knew you would do just as you have done; and——then——I—I resolved to do just as I have done; only to hint to you, that listeners seldom hear any good of themselves, and to shew you how wrong it is to be too suspicious, my dear: was it not well done?—ha, ha, ha!

*Lady Rest.* And do you laugh at me too, sir? Make me your sport? I'll go and get pen and ink this moment.

*Sir John.* Oh! do so, madam; do so—ha, ha! you'll only expose yourself: go and write, madam—ha, ha, ha!

*Lady Rest.* I will, sir. [*Going.*] This door is locked. This won't succeed, sir. I suppose you have the key? Ay, I'll lay my life you have, and some one or other of your creatures is locked in there.

*Sir John.* There, again! This is of a piece with all your vain surmises. Ha, ha! you are mighty silly; indeed you are.

*Lady Rest.* I will search that closet. I am determined I will.

*Sir John.* Do so, madam; do so. Ha, ha! I can't but laugh at her.

*Lady Rest.* I'll have the door broke open, if you won't give me the key.

*Sir John.* Ha, ha, ha!——How you expose yourself!

*Lady Rest.* Will you give me the key, sir?

*Sir John.* Ha, ha, ha! it is too ridiculous!

*Lady Rest.* Mighty well, sir. Tattle!—who waits there? I will find out all your artifices. Tattle, I say!

*Sir John.* Tol de rol lol!—ha, ha, ha!—a silly woman.

*Enter* TATTLE.

*Lady Rest.* Do you know any thing of the key of that closet, Tattle!

*Tat.* The key, madam? I have it, madam.

*Lady Rest.* Give it to me.

*Tat.* That is, I have it not, madam. Don't have it, madam; don't ask for it. [*Aside to her.*

*Lady Rest.* Don't ask for it! but I will have it.—Give me the key this instant.

*Sir John.* How, is she not willing to give it? There is something in this, then. Give the key this moment, you jade; give it to me.

*Lady Rest.* You sha'nt have it, sir. What, you want to hinder me! give the key to me.

*Tat.* Dear heart, I have lost it, madam.—Better not have it, madam. [*Aside.*

*Sir John.* Give it me this moment, I say.

*Lady Rest.* If you don't let me have it, it is as much as your place is worth.

*Tat.* The devil is in it! there it is, then. Let me make my escape. [*Exit.*

*Lady Rest.* Now, sir, we shall see; now, now.

*Sir John.* Ay, now search, if you will. [*Laughing at her.*

*Lady Rest.* [*Unlocking the door.*] You shall be found out, I promise you—Oh! [*Screams out.*

*Sir John.* What is the matter, now?

*Lady Rest.* Heavens! what have we here?

*Sir John.* Oh! there is somebody there, then!

*Enter* BEVERLEY.

*Bev.* Madam——— [*Bows to her.*

*Sir John.* By all that's false, here he is again!

*Lady Rest.* What, in the name of wonder, brings you here, sir?

*Sir John.* Oh, madam, you know his business, and I know his business, and the gentleman knows his business. There he is, madam; there is the gentleman waiting for you; true to his appointment, you see.—Sir, your humble servant. My lady Restless, your humble servant. Now, write to your brother; do. I should be glad to know what you can say now. Now, now; is the case plain now?

*Lady Rest.* I am in amaze! I don't know what to make of this.

*Bev.* Sir, however odd this may appear——

*Sir John.* Ay, now settle it between yourselves; give it what turn you will, sir; she will confirm it. You need not be afraid, sir; you will agree in your story; she is quick of invention, and I dare say you are pretty quick, too.

*Bev.* Sir, I must beg you will put no forced construction upon this matter.

*Sir John.* And you beg the same, madam, don't you?

*Bev.* Sir, I beg to be heard. My business here is to desire you will return me the picture which you have in your possession. It is now become dear to me, sir.

*Sir John.* I dare say it is.

*Bev.* And must be returned.

*Sir John.* It is of equal value to me. It shall rise in evidence against you both.

*Lady Rest.* Evidence against me? Explain yourself. How did you get in here? What's your business? What brought you hither? What's your errand?

*Sir John.* Ay, sir, speak; how did you get in here? What's your business? What brought you hither? What's your errand?

*Bev.* Vexation! I am beset by them both at once.

*Lady Rest.* Speak, sir; explain.

*Sir John.* Ay, sir, explain.

*Bev.* Sir, if you will give me leave, I will satisfy you entirely. I assure you, sir, and you, too, madam, that the liberty I have taken with your closet is entirely owing to your maid, Tattle.

*Sir John.* The jade! I don't doubt it, sir.

*Bev.* To prevent, if possible, the interpretation now put upon seeing me in this house.

*Sir John.* And it was well contrived, sir. Oh, my Lady Restless!

*Lady Rest.* By all that's just, I knew nothing of it!

*Bev.* Nothing, upon my honour, sir!

*Sir John.* Oh, I knew you would both agree.

*Bev.* As I am a gentleman, I tell you the real fact.

*Sir John.* You need not, sir; I know the real fact.

*Bev.* I have no time to lose in frivolous altercation: I must now desire the picture, directly.

*Sir John.* I wish you a good evening.

*Bev.* I shall not stir without it. I should be glad you would comply without a quarrel. I must be obliged to——

*Sir John.* Ay, now her prize-fighter begins. [*Aside.*]—I desire you will quit my house, sir.

*Bev.* I am not to be trifled with. If you don't return it by fair means, I shall be forced to draw.

*Sir John.* There again, now! she has set him on to cut my throat: but I will disappoint her. She is a worthless woman, and I won't fight about her. There, sir, there is your trinket. I shall have proof sufficient without it.

*Bev.* Upon my honour, sir, you will have no proof of any transgression of mine. If you suspect your lady from these appearances, you wrong her much, I assure you.

*Lady Rest.* Sir, I desire you will explain all this.

*Bev.* Call up your maid, madam, and then—

*Sir John.* No, sir; no more of it. I am satisfied. I wish you good night.

*Bev.* When you are willing to listen to reason I shall be ready to convince you of your error. Madam, you may depend I shall do justice to your honour upon all occasions. And now I take my leave: [*Exit.*

*Sir John.* Now, my Lady Restless, now! You are thoroughly known; all your artifices are known; Mr. Beverley is known; my lord Conquest is known!

*Lady Rest.* My lord Conquest, sir! I despise all your imputations. My lord Conquest's maid, sir! what can you say to that?

*Sir John.* Very well, madam! 'tis now my turn to write to your brother, and I promise you I will do it.

*Lady Rest.* You will write, sir, you will write! Well, his assurance is unequalled. [*Aside.*]—You will write! That is pleasant indeed—Write, sir; do; you will only expose your weakness—Ha, ha! you make yourself very ridiculous; you do indeed—Ha, ha!

*Sir John.* 'Sdeath, madam! am I to be insulted with a contumelious laugh into the bargain?

*Lady Rest.* Why, my dear, this was all done—to—to—to—cure you of your jealousy; for I knew you would act as you have done, and so I resolved to do as I have done. Was it not well done, my dear? Ha, ha!—

*Sir John.* Damnation! this is too much: it is beyond all patience.

*Lady Rest.* Ha, ha, ha! the tables are turned, I think. [*Sings, and laughs.*

*Sir John.* Let me tell you, it is no laughing matter. You are a vile woman; I know you, and the world shall know you: I promise you it shall.

*Lady Rest.* I am clear in my own conviction, and your slander I despise: nor shall your artifices blind me or my friends any longer. Sir, as you say, it is no laughing matter. I promise you, you shall never dishonour me again in this house.

*Sir John.* And I promise you, madam, that you shall never dishonour me in any house.

*Lady Rest.* Injurious, false, perfidious man!

*Sir John.* Deceitful, wanton! wanton woman!

[*Exeunt at opposite doors.*

## ACT V.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment at* MR BLANDFORD'S.

*Enter* BELINDA.

*Belin.* UNGENEROUS, false, deceitful Beverley! under that fair appearance, could I imagine that he harboured so much treachery? Attached to Lady Restless; engaged in a dishonourable intrigue with the wife of another, and yet professing an affection for me, with ardour professing it, and for me only! He is likely to regard the honour of the marriage-bed, who is ready to commit a trespass on the happiness of his neighbour. It was Providence sent sir John Restless to pay me a visit. The whole is now brought to light; and, Mr Beverley, I have done with you for ever. I shall now obey my father's commands. By giving my hand to sir William Bellmont's son, I shall punish an undeserving libertine for his treachery.

*Enter* TIPPET.

Well, Tippet, have you done as I ordered you?

*Tip.* I have, madam.

*Belin.* The perfidious man! did you ever know such behaviour?

*Tip.* He is a traitor, like the rest of them.

*Belin.* After all the regard I professed for him! after so many ardent vows and protestations as he has made me!

*Tip.* The hours that he has sighed away at your feet!

*Belin.* I will banish him from my thoughts. My resolution is fixed, and so I have told my father. Is sir William Bellmont with him?

*Tip.* He is, madam: they are both in close talk: they are over their glass, and are so overjoyed at the change of your mind—

*Belin.* And I applaud myself for what I have done—Oh, Mr Beverley! you have forced me to this extremity—Here, take this letter, Tippet, and give it to him with your own hands.

*Tip.* He shall have it. [*Takes the letter.*

*Belin.* Where are all his letters?

*Tip.* Here, madam. [*Shews a parcel.*

*Belin.* The bracelets, and the pocket-book?

*Tip.* I have them safe.

*Belin.* Very well: take his presents home to him; and, do you hear? Bring me back all the foolish letters I writ to him.

*Tip.* Never doubt me: I won't quit the house without them. Exchange is all fair.

*Belin.* That letter will tell him, that though I now break with him in a manner, that may seem abrupt, his character and conduct have compelled me to it. Be sure you confirm that to him.

*Tip.* He shall hear it all, and roundly, too.

*Belin.* Very well: you may go—Tippet—ask his man—as if from yourself—carelessly—as it were by accident—whether his master has talked of me? and what he said, Tippet?

*Tip.* I know Mr Brush: I can wheedle it out of him, I warrant me.

*Belin.* Get at the particulars: not that I care: I don't want to know any thing about the ungrateful man. It does not concern me now. My foolish weakness is over: let him care as little for me as I do for him: you may tell him so.

*Tip.* Your message shan't lose in the carrying.

*Belin.* Well, that's all: you may be gone.

*Tip.* Yes, madam. [*Going.*

*Belin.* Mind what I have said.

*Tip.* You may trust to me. [*Going.*

*Belin.* Don't forget a word of it.

*Tip.* No, not a syllable. [*Going.*

*Belin.* And hark ye? tell him how easy, how composed I am. That will gall him. You see, Tippet, I am quite unconcerned.

[*Forcing a smile.*

*Tip.* Yes, madam: you don't seem to fret in the least.

*Belin.* It is easy to perceive that I am not at all disconcerted. You may see how gay I am upon the occasion.

[*Affecting to laugh.*

*Tip.* [*Laughing.*] Oh! yes, madam: you make quite a laughing matter of it.

*Belin.* Very true: a perfect air of indifference!—Well, I have done. Tell him, that, upon no account, will I ever exchange a word with him; that I will never hear of him; never think of him; never see him; and never, upon any consideration, admit the smallest intercourse; no, never; I will have no more to do with him.

*Tip.* I have my lesson, madam, and I am glad you are so resolved upon it. [*Going.*

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* Mr Beverley, madam.

*Tip.* You must not let him up stairs; my lady will never see his face.

*Belin.* Yes, I think I may see him: shew him up. I will see him once more, and tell him all myself. It will come better from me, Tippet.

*Tip.* Yes, madam, you will do it with a better grace; and your resolution will melt away like a bit of sugar in your mouth.

*Belin.* My resolution is not to be altered: you may withdraw, Tippet.

*Tip.* Yes, madam—Ah! she has a hankering after him still. [*Exit.*

*Belin.* I shall now take my leave of him—But then, my friend Clarissa! can I rob her of her lover? she has not deserved it at my hands. Though Mr Beverley has deceived me, must I be false to honour, and to friendship?

*Enter* BEVERLEY.

*Bev.* Belinda! how gladly do I once again behold—

*Belin.* And with what resentment have not I reason to behold, sir——

*Bev.* You have, Belinda: you have reason, I grant it: forgive the rash words my folly uttered.

*Belin.* Mistake me not, sir: it is not your words I quarrel with: your actions, Mr Beverley; your actions, sir!

*Bev.* They are not to be extenuated: but surely, after the letter you honoured me with—

*Belin.* Sir, I have heard every thing since I was guilty of that folly.

*Bev.* Heard! what?

*Belin.* Dissemble if you will: but this must be the last of our conversing together. My maid will return you whatever I have received from you: all my silly letters I must desire you to deliver to her; and then visit me no more, sir.

*Bev.* Belinda!---you will not wound me thus! Here is the picture which caused that unlucky mistake between us. I have recovered it from sir John Restless.

*Belin.* From my lady Restless, sir.

*Bev.* Madam!

*Belin.* Oh! fy, sir; no more; I have done.

*Bev.* You must, you must accept it. Thus, on my knees, I beg you. Will you, Belinda?

[*Takes her hand.*

*Belin.* Leave me, sir: let go my hand, Mr Beverley: your falsehood——

*Bev.* My falsehood! by all the——

*Belin.* Your falsehood, sir: sir John Restless has told me all; every circumstance.

*Bev.* He has told you! what has he told? his life shall answer it.

*Belin.* You have destroyed my peace of mind for ever. Nay, you yourself have forced me into the arms of another.

*Bev.* What do I hear?

*Belin.* My lady Restless will rejoice at the news: the event will not be unpleasing to her; but she is welcome: let her enjoy her triumph.

*Bev.* You astonish me, Belinda! what does all this mean?

*Belin.* It means, that, in obedience to the commands of a father, I have agreed to marry Mr Bellmont.

*Bev.* Mr Bellmont!—him!—marry him! it is very well, madam: I expected it would come to this, and my lady Restless is only mentioned, on this occasion, as a retort for my accusation about sir John. I understand it; and, by Heaven! I believe that whole story.

*Belin.* You do, sir!

*Bev.* I do: fool that I was to humble myself to you! My pride is now piqued, and I am glad, madam, as glad as you can be, to break off for ever.

*Belin.* Oh! sir, I can be as indifferent on my part. You have only to send me back my letters, and——

*Bev.* Agreed, agreed. I'll go home this moment, and send them all. Before I go, madam, here is your own picture, which you had given me with your own hands. Mr Bellmont will be glad of it; or sir John Restless will be glad of it; or any body will be glad of it; you need not be at a loss.

*Belin.* Very like, sir. [*Takes the picture.*] Tyrant, tyrant man! to treat me in this barbarous manner. [*Cries.*

*Bev.* Tears! Belinda! [*Approaching.*] Belinda!

*Belin.* No more of your insidious arts. I will hear no more. Oh! my heart, my heart will break. I did not think it was in your nature to behave as you have done; but—farewell for ever.

[*Exit* BELIN.

*Bev.* Belinda! hear me but speak. By Heaven, my lady Restless——she is gone: 'sdeath! I have been duped by her all this time; I will now summon up all that is man within me, and, in my turn, despise her.

*Enter* TIPPET.

*Tip.* If you are going home, sir, I will take the things with me now.

*Bev.* Yes; I am going: I will leave this detested—

*Tip.* This abominable place, sir.

[*Laughing at him.*

*Bev.* This hell!

*Tip.* Ha, ha!—ay, sir, this hell.

*Bev.* This mansion of perfidy, ingratitude, and fraud!

*Tip.* Very right, sir; let us go.

*Bev.* And yet——Tippet, you must not stir. Indulge me but a little. It is all a misunderstanding, this.

*Tip.* My lady will have no more to say to you. You may take the things, sir: my lady resigns them to you, sir.

*Bev.* Oh! Tippet, use your interest with her. Keep them in the house till I return. I will clear up this whole matter presently. I must not lose her thus. [*Exit.*

*Tip.* Poor gentleman! he seems in a lamentable way. Well, I fancy for my part he is a true lover after all; that's what I do; and my young lady, I fear, is——

*Enter* BELINDA.

Madam, madam, madam! you are to blame; you are, indeed.

*Belin.* Is he gone?

*Tip.* He is, madam.

*Belin.* Did he say any thing? was he uneasy? or did he carry it off with a——

*Tip.* Oh! madam, he went away sighing short,

his heart throbbing, his eyes brimful, his looks pale: you are to blame; you are, indeed, madam. I dare be sworn he has never proved false.

*Belin.* Oh! Tippet, could I be sure of that!

*Tip.* But you are not sure of the contrary. Why won't you see my lady Restless? See her directly, madam; go to her now, before it is too late; before the old folks, who are putting their heads together, have settled the whole affair. Dear madam, be advised. I hear them coming. They will hurry you into a match, and you'll repent of it. How cruel this is! Here they come. ——No, 'tis madam Clarissa.

*Enter* CLARISSA.

*Cla.* So, Belinda; you have thrown things into fine confusion. You have involved yourself, and my brother, and Mr Bellmont, and every body, in most terrible difficulties.

*Belin.* My dear Clarissa, here have been such doings between your brother and me——

*Cla.* So I find. I met him as I came hither. You have had fine doings, indeed. I have heard the whole; my brother has told me every thing.

*Tip.* Madam, madam! I hear your father. Sir William Bellmont is with him: they are coming up stairs.

*Belin.* I am not in a disposition to see them now. Clarissa, suspend your judgment; step with me to my own room, and I will then give you such reasons, as, you will own yourself, sufficiently justify my conduct.

*Cla.* The reasons must be ingenious, that can make any kind of apology for such behaviour: I shall be glad to hear you.

*Belin.* Very well, follow me quickly. You will find that my resolution is not so rash as you imagine. [*Exit with* CLA.

*Tip.* They have got into a rare puzzle! and how they will get out of it, is beyond my dexterity; and so let them manage as well as they can.

*Enter* BLANDFORD, SIR WILLIAM, *and* YOUNG BELLMONT.

*Bland.* Sir William, we have made a good day's work of it: the writings will be ready to-morrow morning. Where is Belinda? I thought she was in this room.

*Tip.* She is gone into her own room, sir; she is not well.

*Sir Wil.* She has changed her mind, perhaps: I shall have no faith in this business, till it is all concluded.

*Bland.* Changed her mind, say you? No, no; I can depend upon her. I'll bring her to you this moment, and you and your son shall hear a declaration of her mind out of her own lips. Tippet, where is Belinda?

*Tip.* I'll shew you the way, sir.

[*Exit with* BLANDFORD.

*Sir Wil.* Now we shall see what authority you have over your daughter. I have you promise, George; if she consent, you will be ready to comply with the wishes of your father?

*Bel.* Sir—you may depend, that is as far as matters are in my power: but you know, as I told you already, the lady has a settled rooted aversion to me.

*Sir Wil.* Aversion!——she can change her mind, can't she? Women have no settled principle. They like to-day, and dislike to-morrow. Besides, has not her father promised her to you in marriage? If the old gentleman likes you, what have you to do with her aversion?

*Bel.* To do with it! A great deal, I am afraid. You are not now to learn, that, when a young lady marries against her inclination, billet-doux, assignations, plots, intrigues, and a terrible *et cætera* of female stratagem, mount into her brain, and the poor husband in the mean time———

*Sir Wil.* Come, lad; don't play the rogue with your father. Did not you promise me, if she made no objection, that there would be no obstacle on your part?

*Bel.* I promised, to be sure; but yet, I can't help thinking———

*Sir Wil.* And I can't help thinking, that you know how to equivocate. Look you, George, your words were plain downright English, and I expect that you will perform to the very letter. I have fixed my heart upon this match. Mr Blandford and I have passed the day at the Crown and Rolls to read over the deeds. I have been dining upon parchment, as I may say. I now tell you, once for all, you must be observant of my will and pleasure.

*Bel.* To end all dispute, sir, if the lady—— [*Aside.*] She will never consent; I may safely promise.—If the lady, sir, can at once forget her engagements with my friend Beverley———

*Sir Wil.* You will then forget Clarissa? safely spoken. Come, I am satisfied. And now, now we shall see.

*Enter* BLANDFORD.

*Bland.* Sir William, give me joy: every thing goes as I wish. My daughter is a complying girl. She is ready to obey my commands. Clarissa is with her, beseeching, wrangling; complaining, soothing; now in a rage, and now in tears; one moment expostulating, and the next imploring; but all in vain; Belinda holds her resolution; and so, young gentleman, you are now completely happy.

*Bel.* Death to my hopes! can this be true? [*Aside.*

*Bland.* Sir William, give me your hand upon it. This will not only be a match of prudence, but of inclination.

*Sir Wil.* There, George! there is news for you! your business is done.

*Bland.* She owns very frankly, that her heart has been hitherto fixed upon a worthless man: she renounces him for ever, and is willing to give her hand as I shall direct.

*Bel.* What a dilemma am I brought into! [*Aside*

*Sir Wil.* George, what's the matter, boy? You a bridegroom! Wounds! at your age, I could cut a caper over the moon upon such an occasion.

*Bel.* I am more slack-mettled, sir: I cannot leap quite so high.

*Sir Wil.* A cup too low, I fancy. Let us go and finish our bottle. Belinda shall be my toast. I'll give you her health in a bumper. Come, Mr Blandford: I want to wash down the cobwebs of the law. [*Exit.*

*Bland.* I attend you, sir William. Mr Bellmont, follow us: we must have your company: you are under par: come, we will raise you a note higher. [*Exit* BLAND.

*Bel.* You have sunk me so low, that I shall never recover myself. This behaviour of Belinda's!—Can she think her treachery to one lover will recommend her to another?

*Enter* CLARISSA.

*Cla.* Mr Bellmont, I wish you joy, sir. Belinda has consented; and you have done the same. You are both consenting. The match is a very proper one. You will be finely paired.

*Bel.* You are misinformed, Clarissa; why will you do me this injustice?

*Cla.* Injustice! Mr Blandford has reported every thing: he has done you justice: he has told us how easily you have been persuaded: don't imagine that I am hurt. I resign all pretensions: I can be prevailed upon with as much ease as you, sir: I can copy the easy compliance of Mr Bellmont.

*Bel.* If you will but hear me! moderate your anger.

*Cla.* Anger!—anger indeed! I should be sorry any thing that has happened were of consequence enough to disturb my peace of mind.—Anger! I shall die with laughing at the thought. You may be false to your friends, sir; false to your vows; you may break every solemn engagement; Mr Blandford wishes it; Belinda wishes it; and why should not you comply? Follow the dictates of your own heart, sir.

*Bel.* Whatever has happened, Clarissa, I am not to blame.

*Cla.* I dare say not; and here is a lady will say the same.

*Enter* BELINDA.

*Belin.* Spare your reproaches, Clarissa. Mr Bellmont, you too may spare me. The agitations of my mind distress me so, I know not which way to turn myself. The provocation I have had———

*Cla.* Provocation, madam! from whom?

*Belin.* From your brother: you need not question me; you know what his conduct has been.

*Bel.* By Heaven, you wrong him; and so you will find in the end.

*Cla.* Your own conduct, madam! will that stand as clear as my brother's? My lady Restless, I believe, has something to say. It will become you to refute that charge.

*Belin.* Downright malice, my dear: but I excuse you for the present.

*Enter* TIPPET.

*Tip.* [*To* BELIN.] Your chair is ready, ma'am.

*Belin.* Very well: I have not a moment to lose: I am determined to know the bottom of this whole affair. Clarissa, when I return, you will be better disposed to hear me.

*Cla.* You need not trouble yourself, madam: I am perfectly satisfied.——Tippet, will you be so good as to order my chair.

*Belin.* Well; suspend your judgment. This business is of importance: I must leave you now. [*Exit with* TIP.

*Bel.* Clarissa, if you knew how all this wounds me to the heart!

*Cla.* Oh! keep your resolution; go on with your very honourable design: inclination should be consulted; and the necessity of the case, you know, will excuse you to the world.

*Bel.* Command your temper, and the whole shall be explained.

*Cla.* It wants no explanation: it is too clear already.

*Bel.* A moment's patience would set every thing right.—'Sdeath! one would imagine that lady Restless had been speaking to you, too. This is like the rest of them: downright jealousy!

*Cla.* Jealousy!—Upon my word, sir, you are of great consequence to yourself: but you shall find that I can, with perfect serenity, banish you, and your Belinda, entirely from my thoughts.

*Enter* TIPPET.

*Tip.* The chairmen are in the hall, ma'am.

*Bel.* Let me but speak to you.

*Cla.* No, sir: I have done: I shall quit this house immediately. [*Going.*] Mrs Tippet, could you let me have pen, ink, and paper, in your lady's room?

*Tip.* Every thing is ready there, ma'am.

*Cla.* Very well:—I'll go and write a letter to Belinda. I'll tell her my mind, and then adieu to all of you. [*Exit with* TIP.

*Bel.* How perverse and obstinate.

*Enter* SIR WILLIAM.

*Sir Wil.* Well, George, every thing is settled.

*Bel.* Why, really, sir, I don't know what to say. I wish you would consider——

*Sir Wil.* At your tricks again?

*Bel.* I am above an attempt to deceive you: but, if all circumstances were known—I am not fond of speaking detractingly of a young lady; but for the honour of your family, sir, let us desist from this match.

*Sir Wil.* Roguery, lad! there's roguery in this.

*Bel.* I see you will force me to speak out. If there is, unhappily, a flaw in Belinda's reputation———

*Sir Wil.* How?

*Bel.* This is no time to dissemble. In short, sir, my lady Restless, a worthy lady here in the neighbourhood, has discovered a connection between her and sir John Restless; sir John and lady Restless lived in perfect harmony, till this affair broke out. The peace of the family is now destroyed. The whole is come to the knowledge of my friend Beverley: with tears in his eyes, with a bleeding heart (for he loved Belinda tenderly), he has at last mustered up resolution, and taken his final leave.

*Sir Wil.* Ay! can this be true?

*Bel.* It is but too true; I am sorry to report it. And now, sir, judge yourself——Oh!——here comes Mr Blandford: 'tis a dreadful scene to open to him; a terrible story for the ear of a father! You had best take no notice: we need not be accessary to a young lady's ruin: it is a family affair, and we may leave them to patch it up among themselves, as well as they can.

*Sir Wil.* If these things are so, why then the case is altered.

*Enter* BLANDFORD.

*Bland.* Hey! what's in the wind now? You two look as grave! what's come over you? For my part, my spirits are above proof with joy: I am in love with my daughter for her compliance, and I fancy I shall throw in an odd thousand more, to enliven the honey-moon.

*Sir Wil.* Mr Blandford, we are rather in a hurry, I think. We had better not precipitate matters.

*Bland.* Nay, if you are for changing your mind—Look you, sir; my daughter shall not be trifled with. Where is she? Where is my girl? Who answers there?

*Enter* TIPPET.

Where's Belinda?

*Tip.* She is not gone far, sir; just stept out upon a moment's business to sir John Restless.

*Sir Wil.* Gone to sir John Restless! [*Aside.*

*Bel.* You see, sir.——— [*To* SIR WIL.

*Bland.* I did not think she knew sir John.

*Sir Wil.* Yes, she knows him: she has been acquainted with him for some time past.

*Bland.* What freak has she got in her head? She is not gone after her Mr Beverley, I hope? Zookers, this has an odd appearance! I don't like it: I'll follow her this moment.

*Sir Wil.* You are right: I'll attend you.—Now, George, this will explain every thing. [*Aside.*]—Come, Mr Blandford, this may be an escape: young birds will wing their flight.

*Bland.* Well, well, say no more: we shall see how it is. Come, sir William: it is but a step. [*Exit* BLAND.

*Bel.* [*To* TIP.] Where is Clarissa?

*Sir Wil.* [*Looking back.*] What, loitering, George?

*Bel.* I follow you, sir. [*Exit* SIR WIL.] Clarissa is not gone, I hope?

*Tip.* Gone, sir! She is writing, and crying, and wiping her eyes, and tearing her paper, and beginning again, and in such a piteous way!

*Bel.* I must see her: she must come with us. If lady Restless persists in her story, who knows what turn this affair may take? Come, Mrs Tippet, shew me the way. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The hall in the house of* SIR JOHN RESTLESS.

*A loud rap at the door; and enter* ROBERT.

*Rob.* What a hurry you are in there?—This is my lady, I suppose. Where can she have been?—Now for more confusion. If she finds Madam Belinda with sir John, we are all blown up again.

SIR JOHN. [*Peeping in.*]

*Sir John.* Robert, Robert! is that your lady?

*Rob.* Mercy on us! She is coming, I believe, sir.—[*Looks out.*] I see her chair: it is my lady.

*Sir John.* Don't let her know that Belinda is in the house.

*Rob.* Not if I can help it. Trust to me, sir. [*Exit* SIR JOHN.] Here she comes. What has she been about?

*A chair is brought into the hall.*

*Lady Rest.* [*Coming out of the chair.*] Is sir John at home?

*Rob.* I fancy he is, my lady.

*Lady Rest.* Has any body been with him?

*Rob.* He has been all alone, writing letters in his study: he desired not to be interrupted.

*Lady Rest.* I shall not interrupt him, I promise him. You never will tell me any thing, Robert: I don't care who comes after him. To-morrow I shall quit this house, and then he may riot in licentious pleasure. If he asks for me, I am not well; I am gone to my own apartment: I hope to see no more of him. [*Going.*

*Chair.* Shall your ladyship want the chair any more to-night?

*Lady Rest.* I don't know what I shall want. Leave the chair there: you may wait. [*Exit* LADY REST.

*Chair.* Ay, always a waiting job. [*Puts the chair aside. Exeunt Chairman and* ROBERT.]

*Enter* SIR JOHN *and* BELINDA.

*Belin.* If you will but permit me to say a word to her——

*Sir John.* Excuse me for the present: I beg you will.

*Belin.* A short interview with lady Restless might clear up all my doubts: what objection can you have?

*Sir John.* A million of objections. You do not

know the consequence of being seen in this house. She will interpret every thing her own way. I am unhappy, madam, while you stay.

*Belin.* There is more cruelty in your refusal than you can imagine. Mr Beverley's character is in question: it is of the last importance to me to know the whole truth.

*Sir John.* You know it all, madam. Mr Beverley's character is too clear. Proofs thicken, and grow stronger every hour. Since the visit I paid you this very day, I have made another discovery. I found him lurking here in my house.

*Belin.* Found him here, sir?

*Sir John.* Found him here. He was lying in ambush for another amorous meeting.

*Belin.* If there is no mistake in this business—

*Sir John.* Mistake! May I trust my own eyes? I saw him; I spoke to him; I taxed him with his guilt. He was concealed in her closet. Does that amount to proof? Her maid Tattle stationed him there. My lady was privy to it: she favoured the stratagem. Are you satisfied now, madam?

*Belin.* The particulars of this discovery, sir John, may convince me: tell me all, sir: you will oblige me.

*Sir John.* Enquire no more for the present. You will oblige me, madam. Robert shall see you safe home. I would not have my lady find us together: I think I hear her: no, no. In a day or two, the particulars will be known to the wide world. Where is Robert? He shall conduct you home. My peace and happiness require it.

*Belin.* My peace and happiness are destroyed for ever. If your story be true——

*Sir John.* It is too true: I wish you a good night. I am miserable while you are here. Robert!

*Belin.* Deliver me! I am ruined. I hear my father's voice: what brings him hither? I am undone, if he finds me. Let me retire into that room.

*Sir John.* That room will not do: you will be seen there.

*Belin.* Cannot I go up stairs? [*Going.*

*Sir John.* No; I am ruined; if you go that way. Hell and distraction! My lady Restless coming down! Here, madam, here; into that chair. You will be concealed there: nobody will suspect you.

*Belin.* Any where, sir: put me any where, to avoid this impending storm.

[*Goes into the chair.*

*Sir John.* [*Shutting the chair.*]—This is lucky. I am safe now. Let my lady come as soon as she will.

*Enter* LADY RESTLESS.

*Lady Rest.* I only wanted to say one word, sir.

*Enter* BLANDFORD.

*Bland.* Sir John, I am obliged to intrude: I am told my daughter is here.

*Lady Rest.* There! He has heard it all!

*Bland.* I have heard that Belinda came to your house: on what business, I do not know.—I hope, sir John, that you do not harbour the girl to disturb the peace and happiness of a father?

*Sir John.* That imputation, sir——

*Lady Rest.* He does harbour her.

*Sir John.* Mr Blandford, I give you my honour———

*Lady Rest.* I know he does. He has ruined your daughter; he has injured you, sir, as well as me, in the most essential point.

*Sir John.* She raves; she is mad. If you listen to her———

*Enter* SIR WILLIAM *and* BEVERLEY.

*Bland.* I am glad you are come, sir William. This is more than I expected.

*Sir John.* And more than I expected. There, madam, there is your favourite again!

*Bev.* My visit is public, sir. I come to demand, in the presence of this company, an explanation of the mischief you have done me.

*Sir John.* You need not be so public, sir. The closet is ready for you: Tattle will turn the key, and you will there be very safe.

*Lady Rest.* How can you persist in such a fallacy? He knows, he perfectly well knows it was an accident; a mere blunder of the servant, entirely unknown to me.

*Sir John.* She was privy to the whole.

*Bland.* This is beside my purpose. I came hither in quest of my daughter: a father demands her. Is she here? Is she in the house?

*Sir John.* In this house, sir? Our families never visited. I am not acquainted with her.

*Lady Rest.* He is acquainted with her I saw him clasp her in his arms.

*Bland.* In his arms! When? Where? Tell me all!

*Lady Rest.* Yes; now let him give an account of himself.

*Sir John.* When you have accounted for your actions, madam———

*Lady Rest.* Render an account to the lady's father, sir.

*Bland.* Yes; to her father. Account with me, sir. When, and where, was all this?

*Lady Rest.* This very day; at noon; in the Park.

*Bev.* But in the eyes of the whole world: I know Belinda: I can acquit her.

*Sir John.* And I proclaim her innocence. We can both acquit her.

[*Goes up to* BEVERLEY.

*Lady Rest.* You are both in a plot: both combined.

*Sir John.* It was all harmless; all inoffensive. Was not it, Mr Beverley?

*Bev.* Yes; all, all.

*Lady Rest.* All guilt; manifest, downright guilt.

*Sir Will.* If you all talk together, we shall never understand.

*Bev.* I understand it all. Mr Blandford, you met Belinda in the Park this morning?

*Bland.* I did, sir.

*Bev.* You accosted her violently: the harshness of your language overpowered her spirits: she was ready to faint: sir John was passing by: she was going to drop down: sir John assisted her: that is the whole of the story. Injured as I am, I must do justice to Belinda's character.—She may treat me with the caprice and pride of insolent beauty; but her virtue claims respect.

*Sir John.* There now! there! that is the whole of the story.

*Lady Rest.* The whole of the story! No, sir John: you shall suppress nothing: you could receive a picture from her.

*Sir John.* You, madam, could receive a picture; and you, Mr Beverley, could present it.

*Lady Rest.* Mr Beverley, you hear this!

*Bev.* I can justify you, madam. I gave your lady no picture, sir John.

*Sir John.* She had it in her hand. I saw her print her kisses on it, and in that moment I seized it from her.

*Bev.* Belinda dropt it in the Park, when she was taken ill: I had just given it to her. Your lady found it there.

*Lady Rest.* I found it on that very spot.

*Bev.* There, sir; she found it.

*Sir John.* I found you locked up in her cabinet; concealed in private.

*Lady Rest.* But with no bad intent.

*Sir John.* With the worst intent.

*Bev.* Your jealousy, sir John, has fixed an imputation upon me, who have not deserved it: and your suspicions, madam, have fallen, like a blasting mildew, upon a lady, whose name was never before sullied by the breath of calumny.

*Sir Will.* The affair is clear, as to your daughter, Mr Blandford. I am satisfied; and now we need not intrude any longer upon this family.

*Enter* BELLMONT *and* CLARISSA.

Walk in, George, every thing is right: your fears may now go to rest.

*Lady Rest.* I shall not stay another night in this house. Time will explain every thing. Call my chairmen there. Sir John has it his own way at present.

*Enter Chairmen.*

You have settled this among yourselves. I shall now go to my brother's. Sir John, I have no more to say at present. Hold up.

[*Goes to the chair.*

*Sir John.* Let the chair alone. You shall not go: you shall not quit this house till I consent.

[*Goes between her and the chair.*

*Lady Rest.* I say, hold up.

*Sir John.* Let it alone.

*Lady Rest.* Very well, sir: I must be your prisoner, must I?

*Sir John.* It is mine to command here. No loose escapes this night; no assignations; no intrigues, to disgrace me.

*Lady Rest.* Such inhuman treatment! I am glad there are witnesses of your behaviour.

[*Walks away.*

*Bland.* I am sorry to see all this confusion; but, since my daughter is not here——

*Lady Rest.* He knows where she is, and so you will find.

*Sir John.* [*Coming forward.*]—Your daughter is innocent, sir, I give you my honour. Where should she be in this house? Lady Restless has occasioned all this mischief. She formed a story to palliate her own misconduct. To her various artifices, you are a stranger; but, in a few days, you may depend——

*Lady Rest.* [*Aside, as she goes towards the chair.*]—He shall find that I am not to be detained here.

[*Makes signs to the chairmen to hold up.*

*Sir John.* I say, gentlemen, you may depend that I have full proof, and in a little time every thing will——

[*The chair is opened, and* BELINDA *comes out.*

*Lady Rest.* Who has proof now? There, there! In his house all the time!

*Bland.* What do I see?

*Bev.* Belinda here!

*Sir Wil.* So, so! There is something in it, I see.

*Sir John.* Distraction! this is unlucky.

*Lady Rest.* What say you now, Mr Beverley? Now, Mr Blandford! there; ocular demonstration for you!

*Sir Wil.* George, take Clarissa as soon as you will. Mr Blandford, you will excuse me, if I now decline any further treaty with you.

*Bland.* This abrupt behaviour, sir William——

*Sir Wil.* I am satisfied, sir. I am resolved. Clarissa, you have my approbation: my son is at your service. Here, George, take her, and be happy.

*Bel.* [*Taking her hand.*] To you, from this moment, I dedicate all my future days.

*Bland.* Very well: take your own way. I can still protect my daughter.

*Bev.* And she deserves your protection: my dear Belinda, explain all this: I know it is in your power.

*Belin.* This generous behaviour, sir, recalls me to new life. You, I am now convinced, have been accused by my lady Restless without foundation. Whatever turn her ladyship's unhappy self-tor-

menting fancy may give to my conduct, it may provoke a smile, but will excite no other passion.

*Lady Rest.* Mighty fine! what brought you to this house?

*Belin.* To be a witness of your folly, madam, and sir John's into the bargain.

*Bel.* That I can vouch: sir John can fill his mind with vain chimæras, with as apt a disposition as his lady. Beverley has been represented in the falsest colours——

*Lady Rest.* That I admit: sir John invented the story.

*Bev.* And Belinda, madam, has been cruelly slandered by you.

*Sir John.* She has so: that I admit.

*Belin.* And my design to see all this cleared up, brought me to this house, madam. Now, you see what has made all this confusion.

*Lady Rest.* Oh! I expected these airs. You may discuss the point where you please: I will hear no more upon the subject.

[*Exit* LADY RESTLESS.

*Bland.* Madam, the subject must be settled.

[*Follows her.*

*Sir John.* You have a right to insist upon it.—The whole shall be explained in a moment. Sir William, you are a dispassionate man. Give us your assistance. [*Exit.*

*Sir Wil.* With all my heart. George, you are no longer concerned in this business, and I am glad of it. [*Exit with young* BELLMONT.

*Cla.* [*To* BEVERLEY.] Now, brother, now is your time: your difficulties are all removed.——Sir John suspected you without reason: my lady Restless did the same to Belinda: you are both in love, and now may do each other justice. I can satisfy my Lady Restless and your father.

[*Exit.*

*Bev.* [*Aside.*] I see, I see my rashness.

*Belin.* [*Aside.*] I have been terribly deceived.

*Bev.* If she would but forgive my folly.

*Belin.* Why does not he open his mind to me? I can't speak first.

*Bev.* What apology can I make her?——Belinda!

*Belin.* Charming! he begins.

[*Aside, and smiling.*

*Bev.* [*Approaching.*] Belinda!——no answer? Belinda!

*Belin.* Mr Beverley! [*Smiles aside.*

*Bev.* Don't you think you have been very cruel to me, Belinda?

[*Advancing towards her.*

*Belin.* Don't you think you have been barbarous to me? [*Without looking at him.*

*Bev.* I have: I grant it. Can you find in your heart to forgive me?

*Belin.* [*Without looking at him.*] You have kept me on the rack this whole day, and can you wonder that I feel myself unhappy?

*Bev.* I am to blame: I acknowledge it. If you knew how my own heart reproaches me, you would spare yourself the trouble. With tears in my eyes I now speak to you: I acknowledge all my errors.

*Belin.* [*Looking at him.*] Those are not tears, Mr Beverley. [*Smiling.*

*Bev.* They are; you see that they are.

*Belin.* Ah! you men can command tears.

*Bev.* My life! my angel! [*Kisses her hand.*] Do you forgive me?

*Belin.* No; I hate you.

[*Looking pleased at him.*

*Bev.* Now, I don't believe that. [*Kisses her cheek.*] Do you hate me, Belinda?

*Belin.* How could you let an extravagance of temper get the better of you? You know the sincerity of my affection. Oh, Mr Beverley, was it not ungenerous?

*Bev.* It was; I own it; on my knees, I own it.

*Belin.* [*Laughing.*] Oh, proud man! have I humbled you? Since you submit to my will and pleasure, I think I can forgive you. Beg my picture back this moment. [*Shews it him.*

*Bev.* [*Taking the picture.*] I shall adore it ever, and heal this breach with uninterrupted love.

*Enter* SIR JOHN, LADY RESTLESS, SIR WILLIAM, BLANDFORD, BELLMONT, *and* CLARISSA.

*Sir John.* [*Laughing.*] Why, yes; it is very clear. I can now laugh at my own folly, and my wife's, too.

*Lady Rest.* There has been something of a mistake, I believe.

*Bev.* You see, sir John, what your suspicions are come to. I never was within your doors before this day; nor should I, perhaps, have had the honour of speaking to your lady, had it not been for the misunderstanding your mutual jealousies occasioned between Belinda and me.

*Bland.* And your ladyship has been ingenious enough to work out of those whimsical circumstances a charge against my daughter.——Ha, ha!

*Sir John.* It is ever her way, sir. I told you, my dear, that you would make yourself very ridiculous.

*Lady Rest.* I fancy, sir, you have not been behind-hand with me. Ha, ha, ha!

*Sir Wil.* And now, Mr Blandford, I think we may as well let the match go on as we at first intended.

*Bland.* No, no more of that: you have disposed of your son. Belinda, I no longer oppose your inclinations: take Mr Beverley as soon as you will.

*Sir John.* Now let us see: if she agrees to marry him, why, then, she knows he is innocent, and I shall be satisfied. [*Aside.*

*Belin.* If you insist upon it, sir.

*Bland.* I do insist.

*Lady Rest.* If Beverley accepts of her, all my suspicions are at an end. [*Aside.*

*Bev.* Thus, let me take the bright reward of all my wishes. [*Takes her hand.*

*Belin.* Since it is over, you have used your authority, sir, to make me happy, indeed. We have both seen our error, and frankly confess that we have been in the wrong, too.

*Sir Wil.* Why, we have all been in the wrong, I think.

*Sir John.* It has been a day of mistakes, but of fortunate ones, conducing at least to the advantage of all parties. My lady Restless will now be taught———

*Lady Rest.* Sir John, I hope you will be taught———

*Bland.* Never mention what is past. The wrangling of married people about unlucky questions that break out between them, is like the lashing of a top: it only serves to keep it up the longer.

*Sir John.* Very true: and since we have been ALL IN THE WRONG TO-DAY, we will, for the future, endeavour to be ALL IN THE RIGHT.

*Bev.* A fair proposal, sir John: we will make it our business, both you, who are married, and we, who are now entering into that state, by mutual confidence to ensure mutual happiness.

The God of Love thinks we profane his fire,
When trifles, light as air, mistrust inspire.
But where esteem and generous passions spring,
There reigns secure, and waves his purple wing;
Gives home-felt peace; prevents the nuptial strife;
Endears the bliss, and bids it last for life.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

# THE

# JEALOUS WIFE.

BY

*COLMAN.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### MEN.

OAKLY, *unhappy from his wife's jealousy.*
MAJOR OAKLY, *a bachelor, his brother.*
CHARLES, *nephew to* OAKLY; *attached to* HARRIOT.
RUSSET, *father to* HARRIOT.
SIR HARRY BEAGLE, *a sportsman.*
LORD TRINKET, *a coxcomb.*
CAPTAIN O'CUTTER, *an Irish sea-captain.*
PARIS, WILLIAM, } *servants to* OAKLY.
JOHN, *servant to* OAKLY.
TOM, *servant to* SIR HARRY BEAGLE.
*Servant to* LADY FREELOVE.

### WOMEN.

MRS OAKLY, *the Jealous wife.*
LADY FREELOVE, *a woman of fashion.*
HARRIOT, *attached to* CHARLES.
TOILET, *servant to* MRS OAKLY.
*Chambermaid.*

*Scene—London.*

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—*A Room in* OAKLY'S *House.*

*Noise heard within*—MRS OAKLY, *within.*

DON'T tell me—I know it is so—It's monstrous, and I will not bear it.

*Oak.* [*Within.*] But, my dear——

*Mrs Oak.* Nay, nay, &c. [*Squabbling within.*

*Enter* MRS OAKLY, *with a letter,* OAKLY *following.*

Say what you will, Mr Oakly, you shall never persuade me but this is some filthy intrigue of yours.

*Oak.* I can assure you, my love!——

*Mrs Oak.* Your love!—Don't I know your—Tell me, I say, this instant, every circumstance relating to this letter.

*Oak.* How can I tell you, when you will not so much as let me see it?

*Mrs Oak.* Look you, Mr Oakly, this usage is not to be borne. You take a pleasure in abusing my tenderness and soft disposition—To be perpetually running over the whole town, nay, the whole kingdom, too, in pursuit of your amours!—Did not I discover that you was great with mademoiselle, my own woman?—Did not you contract a shameful familiarity with Mrs Freeman?—Did not I detect your intrigue with lady Wealthy?—Was not you——

*Oak.* Oons! madam, the Grand Turk himself has not half so many mistresses—You throw me out of all patience—Do I know any body but our common friends?—Am I visited by any body that does not visit you?—Do I ever go out, unless you go with me?—And am I not as constantly by your side, as if I was tied to your apron-strings?

*Mrs Oak.* Go, go; you are a false man——Have not I found you out a thousand times? And have not I this moment a letter in my hand, which convinces me of your baseness?——Let me know the whole affair, or I will——

*Oak.* Let you know! Let me know what you would have of me——You stop my letter before it comes to my hands, and then expect that I should know the contents of it.

*Mrs Oak.* Heaven be praised! I stopt it—I suspected some of these doings for some time past—But the letter informs me who she is, and I'll be revenged on her sufficiently. Oh, you base man, you!

*Oak.* I beg, my dear, that you would moderate your passion!—Shew me the letter, and I'll convince you of my innocence.

*Mrs Oak.* Innocence!—Abominable!—Innocence!—But I am not to be made such a fool—I am convinced of your perfidy, and very sure that——

*Oak.* 'Sdeath and fire! your passion hurries you out of your senses——Will you hear me?

*Mrs Oak.* No, you are a base man; and I will not hear you.

*Oak.* Why, then, my dear, since you will neither talk reasonably yourself, nor listen to reason from me, I shall take my leave till you are in a better humour. So, your servant! [*Going.*

*Mrs Oak.* Ay, go, you cruel man!——Go to your mistresses, and leave your poor wife to her miseries——How unfortunate a woman am I!—I could die with vexation——

[*Throwing herself into a chair.*

*Oak.* There it is—Now dare not I stir a step further—If I offer to go, she is in one of her fits in an instant—Never, sure, was woman at once of so violent and so delicate a constitution! What shall I say to sooth her? Nay, never make thyself so uneasy, my dear—Come, come, you know I love you. Nay, nay, you shall be convinced.

*Mrs Oak.* I know you hate me; and that your unkindness and barbarity will be the death of me. [*Whining.*

*Oak.* Do not vex yourself as this rate—I love you most passionately—Indeed, I do—This must be some mistake.

*Mrs Oak.* Oh, I am an unhappy woman!

[*Weeping.*

*Oak.* Dry up thy tears, my love, and be comforted! You will find that I am not to blame in this matter—Come, let me see this letter—Nay, you shall not deny me. [*Taking the letter.*

*Mrs Oak.* There! Take it; you know the hand, I am sure.

*Oak.* 'To Charles Oakly, esq.'—[*Reading.*]—Hand! 'Tis a clerk-like hand, indeed! A good round text! and was certainly never penned by a fair lady.

*Mrs Oak.* Ay, laugh at me, do!

*Oak.* Forgive me, my love, I did not mean to laugh at thee—But what says the letter?—[*Reading.*]—'Daughter eloped—you must be privy to 'it—scandalous—dishonourable—satisfaction—'revenge'—um, um, um—'injured father.

'HENRY RUSSET.'

*Mrs Oak.* [*Rising.*]—Well, sir—you see I have detected you—Tell me this instant where she is concealed.

*Oak.* So—so—so—This hurts me—I'm shocked—— [*To himself.*

*Mrs Oak.* What, are you confounded with your guilt? Have I caught you at last?

*Oak.* O that wicked Charles! To decoy a young lady from her parents in the country! The profligacy of the young fellows of this age is abominable. [*To himself.*

*Mrs Oak.* [*Half aside, and musing.*]—Charles! Let me see! Charles! No! Impossible. This is all a trick.

*Oak.* He has certainly ruined this poor lady.

[*To himself.*

*Mrs Oak.* Art! Art! All art! There's a sudden turn now! You have ready wit for an intrigue, I find.

*Oak.* Such an abandoned action! I wish I had never had the care of him. [*To himself.*

*Mrs Oak.* Mighty fine, Mr Oakly! Go on, sir; go on! I see what you mean. Your assurance provokes me beyond your very falsehood itself. So, you imagine, sir, that this affected concern, this flimsy pretence about Charles, is to bring you off? Matchless confidence! But I am armed against every thing—I am prepared for all your dark schemes: I am aware of all your low stratagems.

*Oak.* See there, now! Was ever any thing so provoking? To persevere in your ridiculous—— For Heaven's sake, my dear, don't distract me! When you see my mind thus agitated and uneasy, that a young fellow, whom his dying father, my own brother, committed to my care, should be guilty of such enormous wickedness; I say, when you are witness of my distress on this occasion, how can you be weak enough and cruel enough to——

*Mrs Oak.* Prodigiously well, sir! You do it very well. Nay, keep it up, carry it on, there's nothing like going through with it. O you artful creature! But, sir, I am not to be so easily satisfied. I do not believe a syllable of all this—— Give me the letter—[*Snatching the letter.*]—You shall sorely repent this vile business, for I am resolved that I will know the bottom of it.

[*Exit* MRS OAK.

*Oak.* This is beyond all patience. Provoking woman! Her absurd suspicions interpret every thing the wrong way. She delights to make me wretched, because she sees I am attached to her, and converts my tenderness and affection into the instruments of my own torture. But this ungracious boy! In how many troubles will he involve his own and this lady's family—I never imagined that he was of such abandoned principles. O, here he comes!

*Enter* MAJOR OAKLY *and* CHARLES.

*Cha.* Good-morrow, sir.

*Maj.* Good-morrow, brother, good-morrow!—What! You have been at the old work, I find? I heard you—ding! dong! i'faith! She has rung a noble peal in your ears. But how now? Why, sure, you've had a remarkable warm bout on't.—You seem more ruffled than usual.

*Oak.* I am, indeed, brother! Thanks to that young gentleman there. Have a care, Charles! You may be called to a severe account for this. The honour of a family, sir, is no such light matter.

*Cha.* Sir!

*Maj.* Hey day? What, has a curtain lecture produced a lecture of morality? What is all this?

*Oak.* To a profligate mind, perhaps, these things may appear agreeable in the beginning.—But don't you tremble at the consequences?

*Cha.* I see, sir, that you are displeased with me; but I am quite at a loss to guess at the occasion.

*Oak.* Tell me, sir! Where is Miss Harriot Russet?

*Cha.* Miss Harriot Russet! Sir—explain——

*Oak.* Have not you decoyed her from her father?

*Cha.* I decoyed her!——Decoyed my Harriot!—I would sooner die than do her the least injury. What can this mean?

*Maj.* I believe the young dog has been at her, after all.

*Oak.* I was in hopes, Charles, you had better principles. But there's a letter just come from her father———

*Cha.* A letter! What letter? Dear sir, give it me. Some intelligence of my Harriot, major!—The letter, sir; the letter this moment, for Heaven's sake!

*Oak.* If this warmth, Charles, tends to prove your innocence———

*Cha.* Dear sir, excuse me—I'll prove any thing—Let me but see this letter, and I'll———

*Oak.* Let you see it? I could hardly get a sight of it myself. Mrs Oakly has it.

*Cha.* Has she got it? Major, I'll be with you again directly. [*Exit* CHA. *hastily.*

*Maj.* Hey-day! The devil's in the boy! What a fiery set of people! By my troth, I think the whole family is made of nothing but combustibles!

*Oak.* I like this emotion. It looks well. It may serve, too, to convince my wife of the folly of her suspicions. Would to Heaven I could quiet them for ever!

*Maj.* Why, pray now, my dear naughty brother, what heinous offence have you committed this morning? What new cause of suspicion? You have been asking one of the maids to mend your ruffle, I suppose, or have been hanging your head out of window, when a pretty young woman has past by, or———

*Oak.* How can you trifle with my distresses, major? Did not I tell you it was about a letter?

*Maj.* A letter! Hum—a suspicious circumstance, to be sure! What, and the seal a true lover's knot now, hey? or an heart transfixed with darts; or, possibly, the wax bore the industrious impression of a thimble; or, perhaps, the folds were lovingly connected by a wafer, pricked with a pin, and the direction written in a vile scrawl, and not a word spelt as it should be; ha, ha, ha!

*Oak.* Pooh! brother—Whatever it was, the letter, you find, was for Charles, not for me—this outrageous jealousy is the devil!

*Maj.* Mere matrimonial blessings, and domestic comfort, brother! Jealousy is a certain sign of love.

*Oak.* Love! it is this very love that hath made us both so miserable. Her love for me has confined me to my house, like a state prisoner, without the liberty of seeing my friends, or the use of pen, ink, and paper; while my love for her has made such a fool of me, that I have never had the spirit to contradict her.

*Maj.* Ay, ay; there you've hit it; Mrs Oakly would make an excellent wife, if you did but know how to manage her.

*Oak.* You are a rare fellow, indeed, to talk of managing a wife! a debauched bachelor! a rattle-brained, rioting fellow—who have picked up your common-place notions of women in bagnios, taverns, and the camp; whose most refined commerce with the sex has been in order to delude country girls at your quarters, or to besiege the virtue of abigails, milliners, or mantua-maker's 'prentices.

*Maj.* So much the better! So much the better! Women are all alike in the main, brother, high or low, married or single, quality or no quality. I have found them so, from a duchess down to a milk-maid.

*Oak.* Your savage notions are ridiculous.—What do you know of a husband's feelings? You, who comprise all your qualities in your honour, as you call it! Dead to all sentiments of delicacy, and incapable of any but the grossest attachments to women. This is your boasted refinement, your thorough knowledge of the world! While, with regard to women, one poor train of thinking, one narrow set of ideas, like the uniform of the whole regiment, serves the whole corps.

*Maj.* Very fine, brother! There's common-place for you, with a vengeance! Henceforth, expect no quarter from me. I tell you again and again, I know the sex better than you do.—They all love to give themselves airs, and to have power: every woman is a tyrant at the bottom. But they could never make a fool of me. No, no! no woman should ever domineer over me, let her be mistress or wife.

*Oak.* Single men can be no judges in these

cases. They must happen in all families. But when things are driven to extremities—to see a woman in uneasiness—a woman one loves, too—one's wife, who can withstand it? You neither think nor speak like a man that has loved, and been married, major!

*Maj.* I wish I could hear a married man speak my language—I'm a bachelor, it's true; but I am no bad judge of your case, for all that. I know yours, and Mrs Oakly's disposition to a hair.—She is all impetuosity and fire—a very magazine of touchwood and gunpowder. You are hot enough, too, upon occasion; but then, it's over in an instant. In come love and conjugal affection, as you call it; that is, mere folly and weakness—And you draw off your forces, just when you should pursue the attack, and follow your advantage. Have at her with spirit, and the day's your own, brother!

*Oak.* I tell you, brother, you mistake the matter. Sulkiness, fits, tears! These, and such as these, are the things which make a feeling man uneasy. Her passion and violence have not half such an effect on me.

*Maj.* Why, then, you may be sure, she'll play that upon you, which she finds does most execution. But you must be proof against every thing. If she's furious, set passion against passion; if you find her at her tricks, play off art against art, and foil her at her own weapons. That's your game, brother!

*Oak.* Why, what would you have me do?

*Maj.* Do as you please, for one month, whether she likes it or not; and, I'll answer for it, she will consent you shall do as you please all her life after.

*Oak.* This is fine talking. You do not consider the difficulty that———

*Maj.* You must overcome all difficulties. Assert your right boldly, man! Give your own orders to servants, and see they observe them; read your own letters, and never let her have a sight of them; make your own appointments, and never be persuaded to break them; see what company you like; go out when you please; return when you please; and don't suffer yourself to be called to account where you have been.—In short, do but shew yourself a man of spirit, leave off whining about love, and tenderness, and nonsense, and the business is done, brother!

*Oak.* I believe you are in the right, major! I see you're in the right. I'll do it; I'll certainly do it. But, then, it hurts me to the soul, to think what uneasiness I shall give her. The first opening of my design will throw her into fits, and the pursuit of it, perhaps, may be fatal.

*Maj.* Fits! Ha, ha, ha! Fits! I'll engage to cure her of her fits. Nobody understands hysterical cases better than I do: besides, my sister's symptoms are not very dangerous. Did you ever hear of her falling into a fit when you was not by? Was she ever found in convulsions in her closet? No, no; these fits, the more care you take of them, the more you will increase the distemper: let them alone, and they will wear themselves out, I warrant you.

*Oak.* True—very true—you're certainly in the right—I'll follow your advice. Where do you dine to-day? I'll order the coach and go with you.

*Maj.* O brave! keep up this spirit, and you're made for ever.

*Oak.* You shall see now, major! Who's there?

*Enter Servant.*

Order the coach directly. I shall dine out to-day.

*Ser.* The coach, sir! Now, sir!

*Oak.* Ay, now, immediately.

*Ser.* Now? Sir!—the—the—coach! Sir!—that is—my mistress———

*Oak.* Sirrah! Do as you're bid. Bid them put to this instant.

*Ser.* Ye—yes, sir—yes, sir. [*Exit Ser.*

*Oak.* Well, where shall we dine?

*Maj.* At the St Alban's, or where you will.—This is excellent, if you do but hold it.

*Oak.* I will have my own way, I am determined.

*Maj.* That's right.

*Oak.* I am steel.

*Maj.* Bravo!

*Oak.* Adamant.

*Maj.* Bravissimo!

*Oak.* Just what you'd have me.

*Maj.* Why, that's well said. But will you do it?

*Oak.* I will.

*Maj.* You won't.

*Oak.* I will. I'll be a fool to her no longer.—But, hark ye, major! my hat and sword lie in my study. I'll go and steal them out, while she is busy talking with Charles.

*Maj.* Steal them! for shame! prithee, take them boldly, call for them, make them bring them to you here, and go out with spirit, in the face of your whole family.

*Oak.* No, no—you are wrong—let her rave after I am gone; and, when I return, you know, I shall exert myself with more propriety, after this open affront to her authority.

*Maj.* Well, take your own way.

*Oak.* Ay, ay—let me manage it; let me manage it. [*Exit* OAK.

*Maj.* Manage it! Ay, to be sure, you are a rare manager! It is dangerous, they say, to meddle between man and wife. I am no great favourite of Mrs Oakly's already; and, in a week's time, I expect to have the door shut in my teeth.

*Enter* CHARLES.

How now, Charles, what news?

*Cha.* Ruined and undone! She's gone, uncle! My Harriot's lost for ever!

*Maj.* Gone off with a man? I thought so: they are all alike.

*Cha.* O no! Fled to avoid that hateful match with sir Harry Beagle.

*Maj.* Faith, a girl of spirit! Joy! Charles, I give you joy! she is your own, my boy! A fool and a great estate! Devilish strong temptations!

*Cha.* A wretch! I was sure she would never think of him.

*Maj.* No! to be sure! commend me to your modesty! Refuse five thousand a-year and a baronet, for pretty Mr Charles Oakly! It is true, indeed, that the looby has not a single idea in his head besides a hound, a hunter, a five-barred gate, and a horse-race; but, then, he's rich, and that will qualify his absurdities. Money is a wonderful improver of the understanding. But whence comes all this intelligence?

*Cha.* In an angry letter from her father. How miserable I am! If I had not offended my Harriot, much offended her by that foolish riot and drinking at your house in the country, she would certainly, at such a time, have taken refuge in my arms.

*Maj.* A very agreeable figure for a young lady, to be sure, and extremely decent!

*Cha.* I am all uneasiness. Did not she tell me, that she trembled at the thoughts of having trusted her affections with a man of such a wild disposition? What a heap of extravagancies was I guilty of?

*Maj.* Extravagancies with a witness! Ah, you silly young dog, you would ruin yourself with her father, in spite of all I could do. There you sat, as drunk as a lord, telling the old gentleman the whole affair, and swearing you would drive sir Harry Beagle out of the country, though I kept winking and nodding, pulling you by the sleeve, and kicking your shins under the table, in hopes of stopping you, but all to no purpose.

*Cha.* What distress may she be in at this instant! Alone, and defenceless! Where? Where can she be?

*Maj.* What relations or friends has she in town?

*Cha.* Relations! let me see.—Faith! I have it. If she is in town, ten to one but she is at her aunt's, lady Freelove's. I'll go thither immediately.

*Maj.* Lady Freelove's! Hold, hold, Charles! do you know her ladyship?

*Cha.* Not much; but I'll break through all forms to get to my Harriot.

*Maj.* I do know her ladyship.

*Cha.* Well, and what do you know of her?

*Maj.* Oh, nothing! Her ladyship is a woman of the world, that's all——she'll introduce Harriot to the best company.

*Cha.* What do you mean?

*Maj.* Yes, yes; I would trust a wife, or a daughter, or a mistress with lady Freelove, to be sure! I'll tell you what, Charles! you're a good boy, but you don't know the world. Women are fifty times oftener ruined by their acquaintance with each other, than by their attachment to men. One thorough-paced lady will train up a thousand novices. That lady Freelove is an arrant———By the by, did not she, last summer, make formal proposals to Harriot's father from lord Trinket?

*Cha.* Yes! but they were received with the utmost contempt. The old gentleman, it seems, hates a lord, and he told her so in plain terms.

*Maj.* Such an aversion to the nobility may not run in the blood. The girl, I warrant you, has no objection. However, if she's there, watch her narrowly, Charles! lady Freelove is as mischievous as a monkey, and as cunning, too.——Have a care of her. I say, have a care of her.

*Cha.* If she's there, I'll have her out of the house within this half hour, or set fire to it.

*Maj.* Nay, now, you're too violent——Stay a moment, and we'll consider what's best to be done.

*Re-enter* OAKLY.

*Oak.* Come, is the coach ready? Let us be gone. Does Charles go with us?

*Cha.* I go with you! What can I do? I am so vext and distracted, and so many thoughts crowd in upon me, I don't know which way to turn myself.

*Mrs Oak.* [*Within.*] The coach! dines out! where is your master?

*Oak.* Zounds! brother, here she is!

*Enter* MRS OAKLY.

*Mrs Oak.* Pray, Mr Oakly, what is the matter you cannot dine at home to-day?

*Oak.* Don't be uneasy, my dear! I have a little business to settle with my brother; so I am only just going to dinner with him and Charles to the tavern.

*Mrs Oak.* Why cannot you settle your business here as well as at a tavern? But it is some of your ladies' business, I suppose, and so you must get rid of my company. This is chiefly your fault, major Oakly!

*Maj.* Lord, sister! what signifies it, whether a man dines at home or abroad? [*Coolly.*

*Mrs Oak.* It signifies a great deal, sir! and I don't choose———

*Maj.* Phoo! let him go, my dear sister, let him go! he will be ten times better company when he comes back. I tell you what, sister—you sit at home till you are quite tired of one another, and, then, you grow cross, and fall out. If you would but part a little now and then, you might meet again in good humour.

*Mrs Oak.* I beg, major Oakly, that you would

trouble yourself about your own affairs; and let me tell you, sir, that I——

*Oak.* Nay, do not put thyself into a passion with the major, my dear! It is not his fault; and I shall come back to thee very soon.

*Mrs Oak.* Come back! why need you go out? I know well enough when you mean to deceive me: for, then, there is always a pretence of dining with sir John, or my lord, or somebody; but when you tell me that you are going to a tavern, it's such a bare-faced affront——

*Oak.* This is so strange, now! Why, my dear, I shall only just——

*Mrs Oak.* Only just go after the lady in the letter, I suppose?

*Oak.* Well, well; I won't go then. Will that convince you? I'll stay with you, my dear! will that satisfy you?

*Maj.* For shame! hold out, if you are a man. [*Apart.*

*Oak.* She has been so much vext this morning already, I must humour her a little now. [*Apart.*

*Maj.* Fy, fy! go out, or you're undone. [*Apart.*

*Oak.* You see it's impossible—— [*Apart.*

[*To Mrs* OAKLY.] I'll dine at home with thee, my love.

*Mrs Oak.* Ay, ay; pray do, sir. Dine at a tavern, indeed! [*Going.*

*Oak.* [*Returning.*] You may depend on me another time, major.

*Maj.* Steel and adamant! Ah!

*Mrs Oak.* [*Returning.*] Mr Oakly!

*Oak.* Oh, my dear!

[*Exeunt* MR *and* MRS OAKLY.

*Maj.* Ha, ha, ha! there's a picture of resolution! there goes a philosopher for you! ha! Charles!

*Cha.* Oh, uncle! I have no spirits to laugh, now.

*Maj.* So! I have a fine time on't between you and my brother. Will you meet me to dinner at the St Alban's by four? We'll drink her health, and think of this affair.

*Cha.* Don't depend upon me. I shall be running all over the town in pursuit of my Harriot. I have been considering what you have said; but, at all events, I'll go directly to lady Freelove's. If I find her not there, which way I shall direct myself, Heaven knows.

*Maj.* Hark ye, Charles! If you meet with her, you may be at a loss. Bring her to my house. I have a snug room, and——

*Cha.* Phoo! prithee, uncle, don't trifle with me, now.

*Maj.* Well, seriously, then, my house is at your service.

*Cha.* I thank you: but I must be gone.

*Maj.* Ay, ay; bring her to my house, and we'll settle the whole affair for you. You shall clap her into a a post-chaise, take the chaplain of our regiment along with you; wheel her down to Scotland; and, when you come back, send to settle her fortune with her father: that's the modern art of making love, Charles!

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*A room in the Bull and Gate Inn.*

*Enter* SIR HARRY BEAGLE *and* TOM.

*Sir Har.* TEN guineas a mare, and a crown the man? hey, Tom!

*Tom.* Yes, your honour.

*Sir Har.* And are you sure, Tom, that there is no flaw in his blood?

*Tom.* He's a good thing, sir, and as little beholden to the ground, as any horse that ever went over the turf upon four legs. Why, here's his whole pedigree, your honour!

*Sir Har.* Is he attested?

*Tom.* Very well attested: it is signed by Jack Spur, and my lord Startall.

[*Giving the pedigree.*

*Sir Har.* Let me see—[*Reading.*]—'Tom-'come-tickle-me was out of the famous Tantwi-'vy-mare, by sir Aaron Driver's chesnut horse 'White Stockings. White Stockings, his dam, 'was got by lord Hedge's South Barb, full sister 'to the Proserpine Filley, and his sire Tom 'Jones, his grandam was the Irish Dutchess, and 'his grandsire 'Squire Sportly's Trajan; his great 'grandam, and great great grandam, were New-'market Peggy and Black Moll, and his great 'grandsire, and great great grandsire, were sir 'Ralph Whip's Regulus, and the famous Prince 'Anamaboo.

his
JOHN X SPUR,
mark.
STARTAL.'

*Tom.* All fine horses, and won every thing! a foal out of your honour's bald-faced Venus, by this horse, would beat the world.

*Sir Har.* Well, then, we'll think on't. But, pox on't, Tom; I have certainly knocked up my little roan gelding, in this damned wild-goose chase of threescore miles an end.

*Tom.* He's deadly blown to be sure, your honour; and I am afraid we are upon a wrong scent after all. Madam Harriot certainly took across the country, instead of coming on to London.

*Sir Har.* No, no; we traced her all the way up. But d'ye hear, Tom, look out among the

stables and repositories here in town, for a smart road nag, and a strong horse to carry a portmanteau.

*Tom.* Sir Roger Turf's horses are all to be sold—I'll see if there's ever a tight thing there—but I suppose, sir, you would have one somewhat stronger than Snip?—I don't think he's quite enough of a horse for your honour.

*Sir Har.* Not enough of a horse! Snip's a powerful gelding; master of two stone more than my weight. If Snip stands sound, I would not take a hundred guineas for him. Poor Snip! go into the stable, Tom; see they give him a warm mash, and look at his heels and his eyes. But where's Mr Russet all this while?

*Tom.* I left the 'squire at breakfast on a cold pigeon-pye, and enquiring after madam Harriot in the kitchen. I'll let him know your honour would be glad to see him here.

*Sir Har.* Ay, do: but hark'e, Tom, be sure you take care of Snip.

*Tom.* I'll warrant your honour.

*Sir Har.* I'll be down in the stables myself by and by. [*Exit* TOM.] Let me see———out of the famous Tantwivy by White Stockings; White Stockings his dam, full sister to the Proserpine Filly, and his sire—pox on't, how unlucky it is, that this damned accident should happen in the Newmarket week! ten to one I lose my match with lord Choakjade, by not riding myself, and I shall have no opportunity to hedge my betts neither———what a damned piece of work have I made on't! I have knocked up poor Snip, shall lose my match, and, as to Harriot, the odds are, that I lose my match there, too—a skittish young tit! If I once get her tight in hand, I'll make her wince for it. Her estate joined to my own, I would have the finest stud, and the noblest kennel in the whole country.—But here comes her father, puffing and blowing, like a broken-winded horse up hill.

*Enter* RUSSET.

*Rus.* Well, sir Harry, have you heard any thing of her?

*Sir Har.* Yes, I have been asking Tom about her, and he says, you may have her for five hundred guineas.

*Rus.* Five hundred guineas! how d'ye mean? where is she? which way did she take?

*Sir Har.* Why, first she went to Epsom, then to Lincoln, then to Nottingham, and now she is at York.

*Rus.* Impossible! she could not go over half the ground in the time. What the devil are you talking of?

*Sir Har.* Of the mare you was just now saying you wanted to buy.

*Rus.* The devil take the mare!—who would think of her, when I am mad about an affair of so much more consequence?

*Sir Har.* You seemed mad about her a little while ago. She's a fine mare, and a thing of shape and blood.

*Rus.* Damn her blood!—Harriot! my dear provoking Harriot! Where can she be? Have you got any intelligence of her?

*Sir Har.* No, faith, not I: we seem to be quite thrown out here—but, however, I have ordered Tom to try if he can hear any thing of her among the ostlers.

*Rus.* Why don't you inquire after her yourself? why don't you run up and down the whole town after her?———t'other young rascal knows where she is, I warrant you.—What a plague it is to have a daughter! When one loves her to distraction, and has toiled and laboured to make her happy, the ungrateful slut will sooner go to hell her own way—but she shall have him—I will make her happy, if I break her heart for it.—A provoking gipsy!—to run away, and torment her poor father, that dotes on her! I'll never see her face again.—Sir Harry, how can we get any intelligence of her? Why don't you speak? why don't you tell me?—Zounds! you seem as indifferent as if you did not care a farthing about her.

*Sir Har.* Indifferent! you may well call me indifferent!—this damned chase after her will cost me a thousand-----if it had not been for her, I would not have been off the course this week, to have saved the lives of my whole family -----I'll hold you six to two that-----

*Rus.* Zounds! hold your tongue, or talk more to the purpose-----I swear, she is too good for you—you don't deserve such a wife—a fine, dear, sweet, lovely, charming girl!—She'll break my heart.-----How shall I find her out?-----Do, prithee, sir Harry, my dear honest friend, consider how we may discover where she is fled to.

*Sir Har.* Suppose you put an advertisement into the news-papers, describing her marks, her age, her height, and where she strayed from. I recovered a bay mare once by that method.

*Rus.* Advertise her! What! describe my daughter and expose her in the public papers, with a reward for bringing her home, like horses stolen or strayed!-----recovered a bay mare!—the devil's in the fellow!-----he thinks of nothing but racers, and bay mares, and stallions.-----'Sdeath I wish your-----

*Sir Har.* I wish Harriot was fairly pounded; it would save us both a deal of trouble.

*Rus.* Which way shall I turn myself?-----I am half distracted.-----If I go to that young dog's house, he has certainly conveyed her somewhere out of my reach-----if she does not send to me to day, I'll give her up for ever-----perhaps, though, she may have met with some accident, and has nobody to assist her.-----No, she is certainly with that young rascal.—I wish she was dead, and I was dead-----I'll blow young Oakly's brains out.

*Enter* TOM.

*Sir Har.* Well, Tom, how is poor Snip?

*Tom.* A little better, sir, after his warm mash: but Lady, the pointing bitch that followed you all the way, is deadly foot-sore.

*Rus.* Damn Snip and Lady! have you heard any thing of Harriot?

*Tom.* Why I came on purpose to let my master and your honour know, that John Ostler says as how, just such a lady as I told him madam Harriot was, came here in a four-wheel chaise, and was fetched away soon after by a fine lady in a chariot.

*Rus.* Did she come alone?

*Tom.* Quite alone, only a servant-maid, please your honour.

*Rus.* And what part of the town did they go to?

*Tom.* John Ostler says as how, they bid the coachman drive to Grosvenor-square.

*Sir Har.* Soho! puss——Yoics!

*Rus.* She is certainly gone to that young rogue——he has got his aunt to fetch her from hence——or else she is with her own aunt, lady Freelove——they both live in that part of the town. I'll go to his house; and in the mean while, sir Harry, you shall step to lady Freelove's. We'll find her, I warrant you. I'll teach my young mistress to be gadding. She shall marry you to-night. Come along, sir Harry, come along; we won't lose a minute. Come along.

*Sir Har.* Soho! hark forward! wind 'em and cross 'em! hark forward! Yoics! Yoics! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* OAKLY'S.

*Enter* MRS OAKLY.

*Mrs Oak.* After all, that letter was certainly intended for my husband. I see plain enough they are all in a plot against me. My husband intriguing, the major working him up to affront me, Charles owning his letters, and so playing into each other's hands.——They think me a fool, I find——but I'll be too much for them yet.——I have desired to speak with Mr Oakly, and expect him here immediately. His temper is naturally open; and if he thinks my anger abated, and my suspicions laid asleep, he will certainly betray himself by his behaviour. I'll assume an air of good-humour, pretend to believe the fine story they have trumped up, throw him off his guard, and so draw the secret out of him. Here he comes.—How hard it is to dissemble one's anger! O, I could rate him soundly! but I'll keep down my indignation at present, though it chokes me.

*Enter* OAKLY.

O my dear! I am very glad to see you. Pray sit down. [*They sit.*] I longed to see you. It seemed an age till I had an opportunity of talking over the silly affair that happened this morning. [*Mildly.*

*Oak.* Why, really, my dear——

*Mrs Oak.* Nay, don't look so grave now. Come—it's all over. Charles and you have cleared up matters. I am satisfied.

*Oak.* Indeed! I rejoice to hear it! You make me happy beyond my expectation. This disposition will insure our felicity. Do but lay aside your cruel unjust suspicion, and we should never have the least difference.

*Mrs Oak.* Indeed, I begin to think so. I'll endeavour to get the better of it. And really sometimes it is very ridiculous. My uneasiness this morning, for instance! ha, ha, ha! To be so much alarmed about that idle letter, which turned out quite another thing at last——was not I very angry with you? ha, ha, ha! [*Affecting a laugh.*

*Oak.* Don't mention it. Let us both forget it. Your present cheerfulness makes amends for every thing.

*Mrs Oak.* I am apt to be too violent: I love you too well to be quite easy about you. [*Fondly.*] Well—no matter—what is become of Charles?

*Oak.* Poor fellow! he is on the wing, rambling all over the town in pursuit of this young lady.

*Mrs Oak.* Where is he gone, pray!

*Oak.* First of all, I believe, to some of her relations.

*Mrs Oak.* Relations! Who are they? Where do they live?

*Oak.* There is an aunt of her's lives just in the neighbourhood; lady Freelove.

*Mrs Oak.* Lady Freelove! Oho! gone to lady Freelove's, is he?—and do you think he will hear any thing of her?

*Oak.* I don't know; but I hope so with all my soul.

*Mrs Oak.* Hope! with all your soul! do you hope so? [*Alarmed.*

*Oak.* Hope so! ye—yes—why, don't you hope so? [*Surprised.*

*Mrs Oak.* Well—yes—[*Recovering.*]—O ay, to be sure. I hope it of all things. You know, my dear, it must give me great satisfaction, as well as yourself, to see Charles well settled.

*Oak.* I should think so; and really I don't know where he can be settled so well. She is a most deserving young woman, I assure you.

*Mrs Oak.* You are well acquainted with her, then?

*Oak.* To be sure, my dear! after seeing her so often last summer at the major's house in the country, and at her father's.

*Mrs Oak.* So often!

*Oak.* O ay, very often—Charles took care of that—almost every day.

*Mrs Oak.* Indeed! But pray—a—a—a—I say—a—a— [*Confused.*

*Oak.* What do you say? my dear!

*Mrs Oak.* I say—a—a—[*Stammering.*] Is she handsome?

*Oak.* Prodigiously handsome indeed.

*Mrs Oak.* Prodigiously handsome! and is she reckoned a sensible girl?

*Oak.* A very sensible, modest, agreeable young lady, as ever I knew. You would be extremely fond of her, I am sure. You can't imagine how happy I was in her company. Poor Charles! she soon made a conquest of him; and no wonder: she has so many elegant accomplishments! such an infinite fund of cheerfulness and good humour! Why, she's the darling of the whole country.

*Mrs Oak.* Lord! you seem quite in raptures about her.

*Oak.* Raptures! not at all. I was only telling you the young lady's character. I thought you would be glad to find that Charles had made so sensible a choice, and was so likely to be happy.

*Mrs Oak.* O, Charles! True, as you say, Charles will be mighty happy.

*Oak.* Don't you think so?

*Mrs Oak.* I am convinced of it. Poor Charles! I am much concerned for him. He must be very uneasy about her. I was thinking whether we could be of any service to him in this affair.

*Oak.* Was you, my love? that is very good of you. Let me see? How can we manage it? Gad! I have hit it. The luckiest thought! and it will be of great service to Charles.

*Mrs Oak.* Well, what is it? [*Eagerly.*]—You know I would do any thing to serve Charles, and oblige you. [*Mildly.*

*Oak.* That is so kind! Lord, my dear, if you would but always consider things in this proper light, and continue this amiable temper, we should be the happiest people———

*Mrs Oak.* I believe so: but what's your proposal?

*Oak.* I am sure you'll like it. Charles, you know, may perhaps be so lucky as to meet with this lady—

*Mrs Oak.* True.

*Oak.* Now, I was thinking, that he might, with your leave, my dear——

*Mrs Oak.* Well!

*Oak.* Bring her home here——

*Mrs Oak.* How!

*Oak.* Yes, bring her home here, my dear!—it will make poor Charles's mind quite easy: and you may take her under your protection till her father comes to town.

*Mrs Oak.* Amazing! this is even beyond my expectation.

*Oak.* Why!——what!——

*Mrs Oak.* Was there ever such assurance! Take her under my protection! What! would you keep her under my nose?

*Oak.* Nay, I never conceived—I thought you would have approved——

*Mrs Oak.* What! make me your convenient woman!—No place but my own house to serve your purposes?

*Oak.* Lord, this is the strangest misapprehension! I am quite astonished.

*Mrs Oak.* Astonished! yes——confused, detected, betrayed by your vain confidence of imposing on me. Why, sure you imagine me an idiot, a driveller. Charles, indeed! yes, Charles is a fine excuse for you. The letter this morning, the letter, Mr Oakly!

*Oak.* The letter! why, sure that———

*Mrs Oak.* Is sufficiently explained. You have made it very clear to me. Now I am convinced. I have no doubt of your perfidy. But I thank you for some hints you have given me, and you may be sure I shall make use of them: nor will I rest, till I have full conviction, and overwhelm you with the strongest proof of your baseness towards me.

*Oak.* Nay, but———

*Mrs Oak.* Go, go! I have no doubt of your falsehood: away! [*Exit* MRS OAKLY.

*Oak.* Was there ever any thing like this? Such unaccountable behaviour! angry I don't know why! jealous of I know not what! pretending to be satisfied merely to draw me in, and then creating imaginary proofs out of an innocent conversation!——Hints!——hints I have given her!——What can she mean?———

TOILET *crossing the stage.*

Toilet! where are you going?

*Toilet.* To order the porter to let in no company to my lady to-day. She won't see a single soul, sir. [*Exit* TOILET.

*Oak.* What an unhappy woman! Now will she sit all day feeding on her suspicions, till she has convinced herself of the truth of them.

JOHN *crossing the stage.*

Well, sir, what's your business?

*John.* Going to order the chariot, sir.—My lady's going out immediately. [*Exit* JOHN.

*Oak.* Going out! what is all this?—But every way she makes me miserable. Wild and ungovernable as the sea or the wind! made up of storms and tempests! I can't bear it: and, one way or other, I will put an end to it. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—LADY FREELOVE'S *house.*

*Enter* LADY FREELOVE *with a card—Servant following.*

*Lady Free.* [*Reading as she enters.*]—'And 'will take the liberty of waiting on her ladyship 'en cavalier, as he comes from the menége.'—Does any body wait that brought this card?

*Ser.* Lord Trinket's servant is in the hall, madam.

*Lady Free.* My compliments, and I shall be glad to see his lordship.—Where is Miss Russet?

*Ser.* In her own chamber, madam.

*Lady Free.* What is she doing?

*Ser.* Writing, I believe, madam.

*Lady Free.* Oh! ridiculous!—scribbling to that Oakly, I suppose. [*Apart.*]—Let her know I should be glad of her company here.

[*Exit* SERVANT.

It is a mighty troublesome thing to manage a simple girl, that knows nothing of the world. Harriot, like all other girls, is foolishly fond of this young fellow of her own chusing, her first love, that is to say, the first man that is particularly civil, and the first air of consequence which a young lady gives herself. Poor silly soul!—But Oakly must not have her positively. A match with lord Trinket will add to the dignity of the family. I must bring her into it. I will throw her into his way as often as possible, and leave him to make his party good as fast as he can. But here she comes.

*Enter* HARRIOT.

Well! Harriot, still in the pouts? nay, prithee, my dear little run-away girl, be more cheerful! your everlasting melancholy puts me into the vapours.

*Har.* Dear madam, excuse me. How can I be cheerful in my present situation? I know my father's temper so well, that I am sure this step of mine must almost distract him. I sometimes wish that I had remained in the country, let what would have been the consequence.

*Lady Free.* Why, it is a naughty child, that's certain; but it need not be so uneasy about papa, as you know that I wrote by last night's post, to acquaint him, that his little lost sheep was safe, and that you are ready to obey his commands in every particular, except marrying that oaf, sir Harry Beagle.——Lord! Lord! what a difference there is between a country and town education! Why, a London lass would have jumped out of a window into a gallant's arms, and without thinking of her father, unless it were to have drawn a few bills on him, been an hundred miles off in nine or ten hours, or perhaps out of the kingdom in twenty-four.

*Har.* I fear I have already been too precipitate. I tremble for the consequences.

*Lady Free.* I swear, child, you are a downright prude. Your way of talking gives me the spleen; so full of affection, and duty, and virtue, 'tis just like a funeral sermon. And yet, pretty soul! it can love. Well, I wonder at your taste; a sneaking simple gentleman! without a title! and when, to my knowledge, you might have a man of quality to-morrow.

*Har.* Perhaps so. Your ladyship must excuse me, but many a man of quality would make me miserable.

*Lady Free.* Indeed, my dear, these antediluvian notions will never do now-a-days; and, at the same time, too, those little wicked eyes of yours speak a very different language. Indeed you have fine eyes, child! And they have made fine work with lord Trinket.

*Har.* Lord Trinket! [*Contemptuously.*

*Lady Free.* Yes, lord Trinket: you know it as well as I do; and yet, you ill-natured thing, you will not vouchsafe him a single smile. But you must give the poor soul a little encouragement, prithee do.

*Har.* Indeed, I cannot, madam, for of all mankind Lord Trinket is my aversion.

*Lady Free.* Why so, child? He is counted a well-bred, sensible young fellow, and the women all think him handsome.

*Har.* Yes, he is just polite enough to be able to be very unmannerly with a great deal of good breeding; is just handsome enough to make him most excessively vain of his person; and has just reflection enough to finish him for a coxcomb; qualifications, which are all very common among those whom your ladyship calls men of quality.

*Lady Free.* A satirist, too! Indeed, my dear, this affectation sits very awkwardly upon you.—There will be a superiority in the behaviour of persons of fashion.

*Har.* A superiority, indeed! For his lordship alway behaves with so much insolent familiarity, that I should almost imagine he was soliciting me for other favours, rather than to pass my whole life with him.

*Lady Free.* Innocent freedoms, child, which every fine woman expects to be taken with her, as an acknowledgement of her beauty.

*Har.* They are freedoms, which, I think, no innocent woman can allow.

*Lady Free.* Romantic to the last degree!——Why, you are in the country still, Harriot!

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* My lord Trinket, madam.

[*Exit Servant.*

*Lady Free.* I swear now I have a good mind to tell him all you have said.

*Enter* LORD TRINKET *in boots, &c. as from the Riding-house.*

Your lordship's most obedient humble servant.

*Lord Trink.* Your ladyship does me too much honour. Here I am *en bottine* as you see—just come from the menege. Miss Russet, I am your slave. I declare it makes me quite happy to find you together. 'Pon honour, madam, [*To* HARRIOT.] I begin to conceive great hopes of you: and, as for you, Lady Freelove, I cannot sufficiently commend your assiduity with your fair pupil. She was before possessed of every grace that nature could bestow on her, and nobody is so well qualified as your ladyship to give her the *Bon Ton.*

*Har.* Compliment and contempt all in a breath! My lord, I am obliged to you. But waving my acknowledgements, give me leave to ask

your lordship, whether nature and the *Bon Ton* (as you call it) are so different, that we must give up one, in order to obtain the other?

*Lord Trink.* Totally opposite, madam. The chief aim of the *Bon Ton* is to render persons of family different from the vulgar, for whom, indeed, nature serves very well. For this reason, it has, at various times, been ungenteel to see, to hear, to walk, to be in good health, and to have twenty other horrible perfections of nature. Nature, indeed, may do very well sometimes. It made you, for instance, and it then made something very lovely; and if you would suffer us of quality to give you the *Ton*, you would be absolutely divine: but now——me——madam——me——nature never made such a thing as me.

*Har.* Why, indeed, I think your lordship has very few obligations to her.

*Lord Trink.* Then, you really think it's all my own? I declare now that is a mighty genteel compliment. Nay, if you begin to flatter already, you improve apace. 'Pon honour, lady Freelove, I believe we shall make something of her at last.

*Lady Free.* No doubt on't. It is in your lordship's power to make her a complete woman of fashion at once.

*Lord Trink.* Hum! Why, ay——

*Har.* Your lordship must excuse me. I am of a very tasteless disposition. I shall never bear to be carried out of nature.

*Lady Free.* You are out of nature, now, Harriot! I am sure no woman but yourself ever objected to being carried among persons of quality. Would you believe it, my lord? here has she been a whole week in town, and would never suffer me to introduce her to a rout, an assembly, a concert, or even to court, or to the opera; nay, would hardly so much as mix with a living soul that has visited me.

*Lord Trink.* No wonder, madam, you do not adopt the manners of persons of fashion, when you will not even honour them with your company. Were you to make one in our little coteries, we should soon make you sick of the boors and bumpkins of the horrid country. By the bye, I met a monster at the riding-house this morning, who gave me some intelligence, that will surprize you, concerning your family?

*Har.* What intelligence?

*Lady Free.* Who was this monster, as your lordship calls him? A curiosity, I dare say.

*Lord Trink.* This monster, madam, was formerly my head groom, and had the care of all my running-horses; but, growing most abominably surly and extravagant, as you know all these fellows do, I turned him off; and, ever since, my brother, Slouch Trinket, has had the care of my stud, rides all my principal matches himself—and——

*Har.* Dear my lord, don't talk of your groom, and your brother, but tell me the news. Do you know any thing of my father?

*Lord Trink.* Your father, madam, is now in town. This fellow, you must know, is now groom to sir Harry Beagle, your sweet rural swain, and informed me, that his master and your father were running all over the town in quest of you; and that he himself had orders to enquire after you; for which reason, I suppose, he came to the riding-house stables to look after it, thinking it, to be sure, a very likely place to meet you.—Your father, perhaps, is gone to seek you at the Tower, or Westminster-Abbey, which is all the idea he has of London; and your faithful lover is probably cheapening a hunter, and drinking strong beer at the Horse and Jockey in Smithfield.

*Lady Free.* The whole set admirably disposed of!

*Har.* Did not your lordship inform him where I was?

*Lord Trink.* Not I, 'pon honour, madam:—that I left to their own ingenuity to discover.

*Lady Free.* And, pray, my lord, where, in this town, have this polite company bestowed themselves?

*Lord Trink.* They lodge, madam, of all places in the world, at the Bull and Gate Inn, in Holborn.

*Lady Free.* Ha, ha, ha! The Bull and Gate! Incomparable! What, have they brought any hay or cattle to town?

*Lord Trink.* Very well, lady Freelove! very well, indeed! There they are, like so many graziers; and there, it seems, they have learned that this lady is certainly in London.

*Har.* Do, dear, madam, send a card directly to my father, informing him where I am, and that your ladyship would be glad to see him here. For my part, I dare not venture into his presence till you have, in some measure, pacified him; but, for Heaven's sake, desire him not to bring that wretched fellow along with him.

*Lord Trink.* Wretched fellow! Oho! Courage, Milor Trinket! [*Aside.*

*Lady Free.* I'll send immediately. Who's there?

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* [*Apart to* LADY FREELOVE.] Sir Harry Beagle is below, madam.

*Lady Free.* [*Apart to Servant.*] I am not at home. Have they let him in?

*Ser.* Yes, madam.

*Lady Free.* How abominably unlucky this is! Well, then, shew him into my dressing-room. I will come to him there. [*Exit Servant.*

*Lord Trink.* Lady Freelove! No engagement, I hope. We won't part with you, 'pon honour.

*Lady Free.* The worst engagement in the world. A pair of musty old prudes! Lady Formal and Miss Prate.

*Lord Trink.* O the beldams! As nauseous as ipecacuanha, 'pon honour.

*Lady Free.* Lud! lud! what shall I do with them? Why do these foolish women come troubling me now? I must wait on them in the dressing-room, and you must excuse the card, Harriot, till they are gone. I'll dispatch them as soon as I can; but Heaven knows when I shall get rid of them, for they are both everlasting gossips; though the words come from her ladyship one by one, like drops from a still, while the other tiresome woman overwhelms us with a flood of impertinence. Harriot, you'll entertain his lordship till I return. [*Exit.*

*Lord Trink.* Gone! 'Egad, my affairs here begin to grow very critical—the father in town! lover in town! Surrounded by enemies! What shall I do?—[*To* HARRIOT.]—I have nothing fit for it but a coup de main. 'Pon honour, I am not sorry for the coming in of these old tabbies, and am much obliged to her ladyship for leaving us such an agreeable téte-a-téte.

*Har.* Your lordship will find me extremely bad company.

*Lord Trink.* Not in the least, my dear! we'll entertain ourselves one way or other, I'll warrant you. 'Egad, I think it a mighty good opportunity to establish a better acquaintance with you.

*Har.* I don't understand you.

*Lord Trink.* No? Why, then, I'll speak plainer.—[*Pausing, and looking her full in the face.*] You are an amazing fine creature, 'pon honour.

*Har.* If this be your lordship's polite conversation, I shall leave you to amuse yourself in soliloquy. [*Going.*

*Lord Trink.* No, no, no, madam; that must not be.—[*Stopping her.*]—This place, my passion, the opportunity, all conspire——

*Har.* How, sir! You don't intend to do me any violence?

*Lord Trink.* 'Pon honour, madam, it will be doing great violence to myself, if I do not. You must excuse me.

[*Struggling with her.*

*Har.* Help! Help! Murder! Help!

*Lord Trink.* Your yelping will signify nothing; nobody will come. [*Struggling.*

*Har.* For Heaven's sake! Sir! My lord!

[*Noise within.*

*Lord Trink.* Pox on't! what noise? Then I must be quick. [*Still struggling.*

*Har.* Help! Murder! Help! Help!

*Enter* CHARLES *hastily.*

*Cha.* What do I hear? My Harriot's voice calling for help? Ha!—[*Seeing them.*]—Is it possible? Turn, ruffian! I'll find you employment.

[*Drawing.*

*Lord Trink.* You are a most impertinent scoundrel, and I'll whip you through the lungs, 'pon honour.

[*They fight,* HARRIOT *runs out, screaming help, &c.*

*Enter* LADY FREELOVE, SIR HARRY BEAGLE, *and Servants.*

*Lady Free.* How's this? Swords drawn in my house!—Part them—[*They are parted.*]—This is the most impudent thing!

*Lord Trink.* Well, rascal, I shall find a time; I know you, sir!

*Cha.* The sooner the better; I know your lordship, too.

*Sir Har.* I'faith, madam,—[*To* LADY FREE.] we had like to have been in at the death.

*Lady Free.* What is all this? Pray, sir, what is the meaning of your coming hither to raise this disturbance? Do you take my house for a brothel? [*To* CHA.

*Cha.* Not I, indeed, madam! but I believe his lordship does.

*Lord Trink.* Impudent scoundrel!

*Lady Free.* Your conversation, sir, is as insolent as your behaviour. Who are you? What brought you here?

*Cha.* I am one, madam, always ready to draw my sword in defence of innocence in distress, and more especially in the cause of that lady I delivered from his lordship's fury; in search of whom I troubled your ladyship's house.

*Lady Free.* Her lover, I suppose, or what?

*Cha.* At your ladyship's service; though not quite so violent in my passion as his lordship there.

*Lord Trink.* Impertinent rascal!

*Lady Free.* You shall be made to repent of this insolence.

*Lord Trink.* Your ladyship may leave that to me.

*Cha.* Ha, ha!

*Sir Har.* But pray, what is become of the lady all this while? Why, lady Freelove, you told me she was not here, and, i'faith, I was just drawing off another way, if I had not heard the view-halloo.

*Lady Free.* You shall see her immediately, sir! Who's there?

*Enter a Servant.*

Where is Miss Russet?

*Ser.* Gone out, madam.

*Lady Free.* Gone out! Where?

*Ser.* I don't know, madam: but she ran down the back stairs crying for help, crossed the servants' hall in tears, and took a chair at the door.

*Lady Free.* Blockheads! to let her go out in a chair alone! Go, and inquire after her immediately. [*Exit Ser.*

*Sir Har.* Gone! What a pox, had I just run

her down, and is the little puss stole away at last?

*Lady Free.* Sir, if you will walk in—[*To* SIR HAR.]—with his lordship and me, perhaps you may hear some tidings of her; though it is most probable she may be gone to her father. I don't know any other friend she has in town.

*Cha.* I am heartily glad she is gone. She is safer any where than in this house.

*Lady Free.* Mighty well, sir! My lord! Sir Harry! I attend you.

*Lord Trink.* You shall hear from me, sir!

[*To* CHA.

*Cha.* Very well, my lord.

*Sir Har.* Stole away! Pox on't—stole away.

[*Exeunt* SIR HAR. *and* LORD TRINK.

*Lady Free.* Before I follow the company, give me leave to tell you, sir, that your behaviour here has been so extraordinary——

*Cha.* My treatment here, madam, has indeed been very extraordinary.

*Lady Free.* Indeed! Well—no matter—permit me to acquaint you, sir, that there lies your way out, and that the greatest favour you can do me, is to leave the house immediately.

*Cha.* That your ladyship may depend on.—Since you have put Miss Russet to flight, you may be sure of not being troubled with my company. I'll after her immediately—I cannot rest till I know what is become of her.

*Lady Free.* If she has any regard for her reputation, she'll never put herself into such hands as yours.

*Cha.* O, madam, there can be no doubt of her regard for that, by her leaving your ladyship.

*Lady Free.* Leave my house!

*Cha.* Directly. A charming house! And a charming lady of the house, too! Ha, ha, ha!

*Lady Free.* Vulgar fellow!

*Cha.* Fine lady!

[*Exeunt severally.*

## ACT III.

SCENE I.—LADY FREELOVE'S *house.*

*Enter* LADY FREELOVE *and* LORD TRINKET.

*Lord Trink.* DOUCEMENT, doucement, my dear lady Freelove! Excuse me! I meant no harm, 'pon honour.

*Lady Free.* Indeed, indeed, my lord Trinket, this is absolutely intolerable. What, to offer rudeness to a young lady in my house! What will the world say of it?

*Lord Trink.* Just what the world pleases. It does not signify a doit what they say. However, I ask pardon; but, 'egad, I thought it was the best way.

*Lady Free.* For shame, for shame, my lord! I am quite hurt at your want of discretion.—Leave the whole conduct of this affair to me, or I'll have done with it at once. How strangely you have acted! There, I went out of the way on purpose to serve you, by keeping off that looby sir Harry Beagle, and preventing him or her father from seeing the girl, till we had some chance of managing her ourselves. And then you chose to make a disturbance, and spoiled all.

*Lord Trink.* Devil take sir Harry and t'other scoundrel, too! That they should come driving hither just at so critical an instant! And that the wild little thing should take wing, and fly away the lord knows whither!

*Lady Free.* Ay——And there again you was indiscreet past redemption. To let her know, that her father was in town, and where he was to be found, too! For there I am confident she must be gone, as she is not acquainted with one creature in London.

*Lord Trink.* Why a father is, in these cases, the *pisaller* I must confess. 'Pon honour, lady Freelove, I can scarce believe this obstinate girl a relation of yours. Such narrow notions! I'll swear, there is less trouble in getting ten women of the *prémiere volée*, than in conquering the scruples of a silly girl in that style of life.

*Lady Free.* Come, come, my lord, a truce with your reflections on my niece! Let us consider what is best to be done.

*Lord Trink.* E'en just what your ladyship thinks proper——For my part, I am entirely *dérangée.*

*Lady Free.* Will you submit to be governed by me, then?

*Lord Trink.* I'll be all obedience——your ladyship's slave, 'pon honour.

*Lady Free.* Why, then, as this is rather an ugly affair in regard to me, as well as your lordship, and may make some noise, I think it absolutely necessary, merely to save appearances, that you should wait on her father, palliate matters as well as you can, and make a formal repetition of your proposal of marriage.

*Lord Trink.* Your ladyship is perfectly in the right——You are quite *au fait* of the affair. It shall be done immediately, and then your reputation will be safe, and my conduct justified to all the world——But, should the old rustic continue as stubborn as his daughter, your ladyship, I hope, has no objections to my being a little *rusée*, for I must have her, 'pon honour.

*Lady Free.* Not in the least.

*Lord Trink.* Or, if a good opportunity should offer, and the girl should be still untractable——

*Lady Free.* Do what you will, I wash my hands of it. She's out of my care now, you know——But you must beware your rivals. One, you know, is in the house with her, and the other

will lose no opportunity of getting to her.

*Lord Trink.* As to the fighting gentleman, I shall cut out work for him in his own way. I'll send him a *petit billet* to-morrow morning, and then there can be no great difficulty in outwitting her bumpkin father, and the baronet.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* Captain O'Cutter to wait on your ladyship.

*Lady Free.* O the hideous fellow! The Irish sailor-man, for whom I prevailed on your lordship to get the post of regulating captain. I suppose he is come to load me with his odious thanks. I won't be troubled with him now.

*Lord Trink.* Let him in, by all means. He is the best creature to laugh at in nature. He is a perfect sea-monster, and always looks and talks as if he was upon deck. Besides, a thought strikes me——He may be of use.

*Lady Free.* Well—send the creature up then. [*Exit Servant.*

But what fine thought is this!

*Lord Trink.* A *coup de maitre*, 'pon honour! I intend——but hush! Here the porpus comes.

*Enter* CAPTAIN O'CUTTER.

*Lady Free.* Captain, your humble servant! I am very glad to see you.

*O'Cut.* I am much oblaged to you, my lady! Upon my conscience, the wind favours me at all points. I had no sooner got under way to tank your ladyship, but I have borne down upon my noble friend his lordship, too. I hope your lordship's well?

*Lord Trink.* Very well, I thank you, captain!—But you seem to be hurt in the service; what is the meaning of that patch over your right eye?

*O'Cut.* Some advanced wages from my new post, my lord! This pressing is hot work, though it entitles us to smart-money.

*Lady Free.* And pray, in what perilous adventure did you get that scar, captain?

*O'Cut.* Quite out of my element, indeed, my lady! I got it in an engagement by land. A day or two I spied three stout fellows, belonging to a merchantman. They made down Wapping. I immediately gave my lads the signal to chase, and we bore down right upon them. They tacked, and lay to. We gave them a thundering broadside, which they resaved like men; and one of them made use of small arms, which carried off the weathermost corner of Ned Gage's hat; so, I immediately stood in with him, and raked him, but resaved a wound on my starboard eye, from the stock of the pistol. However, we took them all, and they now lie under the hatches, with fifty more, a-board a tender off the Tower.

*Lord Trink.* Well done, noble captain!——But, however, you will soon have better employment, for I think the next step to your present post, is commonly a ship.

*O'Cut.* The sooner the better, my lord! Honest Terence O'Cutter shall never flinch, I warrant you; and has had as much sea-sarvice as any man in the navy.

*Lord Trink.* You may depend on my good offices, captain!—But, in the mean time, it is in your power to do me a favour.

*O'Cut.* A favour! my lord! your lordship does me honour. I would go round the world, from one end to the other, by day or by night, to sarve your lordship, or my good lady here.

*Lord Trink.* Dear madam, the luckiest thought in nature! [*Apart to* LADY FREE.]—The favour I have to ask of you, captain, need not carry you so far out of your way. The whole affair is, that there are a couple of impudent fellows at an inn in Holborn, who have affronted me, and you would oblige me infinitely, by pressing them into his Majesty's service.

*Lady Free.* Now, I understand you——Admirable!

[*Apart to* L. TRINK.

*O'Cut.* With all my heart, my lord, and tank you too, fait. But, by the by, I hope they are not housekeepers, or freemen of the city. There's the devil: ay in meddling with them. They boder one; about liberty and property, and stuff. It was but t'other day that Jack Trowser was carried before my lord Mayor, and lost above a twelvemonth's pay, for nothing at all, at all.

*Lord Trink.* I'll take care you shall be brought into no trouble. These fellows were formerly my grooms. If you'll call on me in the morning, I'll go with you to the place.

*O'Cut.* I'll be with your lordship, and bring with me four or five as pretty boys as you'll wish to clap your two lucking eyes upon of a summer's day.

*Lord Trink.* I am much obliged to you. But, captain, I have another little favour to beg of you.

*O'Cut.* Upon my shoul, and I'll do it!

*Lord Trink.* What, before you know it?

*O'Cut.* Fore and aft, my lord!

*Lord Trink.* A gentleman has offended me in a point of honour——

*O'Cut.* Cut his troat.

*Lord Trink.* Will you carry him a letter from me?

*O'Cut.* Indeed, and I will: and I'll take you in tow, too, and you shall engage him yard-arm and yard-arm.

*Lord Trink.* Why, then, captain, you'll come a little earlier to-morrow morning than you proposed, that you may attend him with my billet, before you proceed on the other affair.

*O'Cut.* Never fear it, my lord!—Your sarvant!—My ladyship, your humble sarvant!

*Lady Free.* Captain, yours! Pray give my

service to my friend Mrs O'Cutter. How does she do?

*O'Cut.* I tank your ladyship's axing——The dear creature is purely tight and well.

*Lord Trink.* How many children have you, captain?

*O'Cut.* Four, and please your lordship, and another upon the stocks.

*Lord Trink.* When it is launched, I hope to be at the christening. I'll stand godfather, captain!

*O'Cut.* Your lordship's very good.

*Lord Trink.* Well, you'll come to-morrow.

*O'Cut.* O, I'll not fail, my lord! Little Terence O'Cutter never fails, fait, when a troat is to be cut. [*Exit.*

*Lady Free.* Ha, ha, ha! But sure you don't intend to ship off both her father and her country lover for the Indies?

*Lord Trink.* O no! Only let them contemplate the inside of a ship for a day or two.

*Lady Free.* Well, but after all, my lord, this is a very bold undertaking. I don't think you'll be able to put it in practice.

*Lord Trink.* Nothing so easy, 'pon honour. To press a gentleman——a man of quality——one of us——would not be so easy, I grant you. But these fellows, you know, have not half so decent an appearance as one of my footmen; and, from their behaviour, conversation, and dress, it is very possible to mistake them for grooms and ostlers.

*Lady Free.* There may be something in that indeed. But what use do you propose to make of this stratagem?

*Lord Trink.* Every use in nature. This artifice must at least take them out of the way for some time; and, in the mean while, measures may be concerted to carry off the girl.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* Mrs Oakly, madam, is at the door, in her chariot, and desires to have the honour of speaking to your ladyship, on particular business.

*Lord Trink.* Mrs Oakly! what can that jealous-pated woman want with you?

*Lady Free.* No matter what.——I hate her mortally.—Let her in. [*Exit Servant.*

*Lord Trink.* What wind blows her hither?

*Lady Free.* A wind that must blow us some good.

*Lord Trink.* How?——I was amazed you chose to see her.

*Lady Free.* How can you be so slow of apprehension?——She comes, you may be sure, on some occasion relating to this girl: in order to assist young Oakly, perhaps to sooth me, and gain intelligence, and so forward the match: but I'll forbid the banns, I warrant you.——Whatever she wants, I'll draw some sweet mischief out of it.——But away! away!——I think I hear her—slip down the back stairs——or, stay, now I think on't, go out this way—meet her—and be sure to make her a very respectful bow, as you go out.

*Lord Trink.* Hush! here she is.

*Enter* MRS OAKLY. [LORD TRINKET *bows, and exit.*]

*Mrs Oak.* I beg pardon for giving your ladyship this trouble.

*Lady Free.* I am always glad of the honour of seeing Mrs Oakly.

*Mrs Oak.* There is a letter, madam, just come from the country, which has occasioned some alarm in our family. It comes from Mr Russet——

*Lady Free.* Mr Russet!

*Mrs Oak.* Yes, from Mr Russet, madam; and is chiefly concerning his daughter. As she has the honour of being related to your ladyship, I took the liberty of waiting on you.

*Lady Free.* She is indeed, as you say, madam, a relation of mine; but, after what has happened, I scarce know how to acknowledge her.

*Mrs Oak.* Has she been so much to blame, then?

*Lady Free.* So much, madam?——Only judge for yourself.——Though she had been so indiscreet, not to say indecent in her conduct, as to elope from her father, I was in hopes to have hushed up that matter, for the honour of our family.——But she has run away from me too, madam!—went off in the most abrupt manner, not an hour ago.

*Mrs Oak.* You surprise me. Indeed her father, by his letter, seems apprehensive of the worst consequences. But does your ladyship imagine any harm has happened?

*Lady Free.* I cannot tell—I hope not—but, indeed, she is a strange girl. You know, madam, young women cannot be too cautious in their conduct. She is, I am sorry to declare it, a very dangerous person to take into a family.

*Mrs Oak.* Indeed! [*Alarmed.*

*Lady Free.* If I was to say all I know!

*Mrs Oak.* Why, sure, your ladyship knows of nothing that has been carried on clandestinely between her and Mr Oakly. [*In disorder.*

*Lady Free.* Mr Oakly!

*Mrs Oak.* Mr Oakly—no, not Mr Oakly—that is, not my husband—I don't mean him—not him—but his nephew—young Mr Oakly.

*Lady Free.* Jealous of her husband! So, so! Now I know my game. [*Aside.*

*Mrs Oak.* But pray, madam, give me leave to ask, was there any thing very particular in her conduct, while she was in your ladyship's house?

*Lady Free.* Why, really, considering she was here scarce a week, her behaviour was rather mysterious; letters and messages, to and fro, between her and I don't know who—I suppose you know that Mr Oakly's nephew has been here, madam?

*Mrs Oak.* I was not sure of it. Has he been to wait on your ladyship already on this occasion?

*Lady Free.* To wait on me! The expression is much too polite for the nature of his visit. My lord Trinket, the nobleman whom you met as you came in, had, you must know, madam, some thoughts of my niece, and, as it would have been an advantageous match, I was glad of it; but, I believe, after what he has been witness to this morning, he will drop all thoughts of it.

*Mrs Oak.* I am sorry that any relation of mine should so far forget himself——

*Lady Free.* It's no matter—his behaviour, indeed, as well as the young lady's, was pretty extraordinary—and yet, after all, I don't believe he is the object of her affections.

*Mrs Oak.* Ha! [*Much alarmed.*

*Lady Free.* She has certainly an attachment somewhere, a strong one; but his lordship, who was present all the time, was convinced, as well as myself, that Mr Oakly's nephew was rather a convenient friend, a kind of go-between, than the lover. Bless me, madam, you change colour! You seem uneasy! What's the matter?

*Mrs Oak.* Nothing—madam—nothing—— a little shocked that my husband should behave so.

*Lady Free.* Your husband, madam!

*Mrs Oak.* His nephew, I mean. His unpardonable rudeness—but I am not well—I am sorry I have given your ladyship so much trouble—I'll take my leave.

*Lady Free.* I declare, madam, you frighten me. Your being so visibly affected makes me quite uneasy. I hope I have not said any thing—I really don't believe your husband is in fault. Men, to be sure, allow themselves strange liberties. But I think, nay, I am sure, it cannot lie so. It is impossible. Don't let what I have said have any effect on you.

*Mrs Oak.* No, it has not—I have no idea of such a thing. Your ladyship's most obedient—[*Going, returns.*]—but sure, madam, you have not heard, or don't know any thing.

*Lady Free.* Come, come, Mrs Oakly, I see how it is, and it would not be kind to say all I know. I dare not tell you what I have heard.—Only be on your guard—there can be no harm in that. Do you be against giving the girl any countenance, and see what effect it has.

*Mrs Oak.* I will—I am much obliged—But does it appear to your ladyship, then, that Mr Oakly——

*Lady Free.* No, not at all—nothing in't, I dare say—I would not create uneasiness in a family—but I am a woman myself, have been married, and cannot help feeling for you. But don't be uneasy; there's nothing in't, I dare say.

*Mrs Oak.* I think so. Your ladyship's humble servant.

*Lady Free.* Your servant, madam. Pray don't be alarmed; I must insist on your not making yourself uneasy.

*Mrs Oak.* Not at all alarmed—not in the least uneasy. Your most obedient.

[*Exit* MRS OAKLY.

*Lady Free.* Ha, ha, ha! There she goes, brimful of anger and jealousy, to vent it all on her husband. Mercy on the poor man!

*Enter* LORD TRINKET.

Bless me! My lord, I thought you was gone.

*Lord Trink.* Only into the next room. My curiosity would not let me stir a step further. I heard it all, and was never more diverted, in my life, 'pon honour. Ha, ha, ha!

*Lady Free.* How the silly creature took it! Ha, ha, ha!

*Lord Trink.* Ha, ha, ha! My dear lady Freelove, you have a deal of ingenuity, a deal of esprit, 'pon honour.

*Lady Free.* A little shell thrown into the enemy's works, that's all.

*Both.* Ha, ha, ha, ha!

*Lady Free.* But I must leave you. I have twenty visits to pay. You'll let me know how you succeeded in your secret expedition?

*Lord Trink.* That you may depend on.

*Lady Free.* Remember, then, that to-morrow morning I expect to see you. At present, your lordship will excuse me. Who's there?—[*Calling to the servants.*]—Send Epingle into my dressing-room.

[*Exit* LADY FREELOVE.

*Lord Trink.* So! If O'Cutter and his myrmidons are alert, I think I cannot fail of success, and then *prenez garde*, Mademoiselle Harriot! This is one of the drollest circumstances in nature! Here is my lady Freelove, a woman of sense, a woman that knows the world, too, assisting me in this design. I never knew her ladyship so much out. How, in the name of wonder, can she imagine that a man of quality, or any man else, 'egad, would marry a fine girl, after—not I, 'pon honour. No—no—when I have had the *entamure*, let who will take the rest of the loaf.

[*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* MR OAKLY'S *house.*

*Enter* HARRIOT *following a servant.*

*Har.* Not at home! Are you sure that Mrs Oakly is not at home, sir?

*Ser.* She is just gone out, madam.

*Har.* I have something of consequence——— If you will give me leave, sir, I will wait till she returns.

*Ser.* You would not see her, if you did, madam. She has given positive orders not to be interrupted with any company to-day.

*Har.* Sure, sir, if you was to let her know that I had particular business———

*Ser.* I should not dare to trouble her, indeed, madam.

*Har.* How unfortunate this is! What can I do? Pray, sir, can I see Mr Oakly, then?

*Ser.* Yes, madam: I'll acquaint my master, if you please.

*Har.* Pray do, sir.

*Ser.* Will you favour me with your name, madam?

*Har.* Be pleased, sir, to let him know that a lady desires to speak with him.

*Ser.* I shall, madam. [*Exit Ser.*

*Har.* I wish I could have seen Mrs Oakly.—What an unhappy situation am I reduced to! What will the world say of me? And yet what could I do? To remain at lady Freelove's was impossible. Charles, I must own, has this very day revived much of my tenderness for him; and yet I dread the wildness of his disposition. I must now, however, solicit Mr Oakly's protection, a circumstance (all things considered) rather disagreeable to a delicate mind, and which nothing, but the absolute necessity of it, could excuse. Good Heavens! What a multitude of difficulties and distresses am I thrown into, by my father's obstinate perseverance to force me into a marriage which my soul abhors!

*Enter* OAKLY.

*Oak.* [*At entering.*]—Where is this lady?—[*Seeing her.*]—Bless me, Miss Russet, is it you? Was ever any thing so unlucky?—[*Aside.*]—Is it possible, madam, that I see you here?

*Har.* It is too true, sir; and the occasion on which I am now to trouble you, is so much in need of an apology, that———

*Oak.* Pray make none, madam. If my wife should return before I get her out of the house again! [*Aside.*

*Har.* I dare say, sir, you are not quite a stranger to the attachment your nephew has professed to me?

*Oak.* I am not, madam. I hope Charles has not been guilty of any baseness towards you. If he has, I'll never see his face again.

*Har.* I have no cause to accuse him. But—

*Oak.* But what, madam? Pray be quick! The very person in the world I would not have seen! [*Aside.*

*Har.* You seem uneasy, sir!

*Oak.* No, nothing at all——Pray go on, madam.

*Har.* I am at present, sir, through a concurrence of strange accidents, in a very unfortunate situation, and do not know what will become of me without your assistance.

*Oak.* I'll do every thing in my power to serve you; I know of your leaving your father, by a letter we have had from him. Pray, let me know the rest of your story.

*Har.* My story, sir, is very short. When I left my father's, I came immediately to London, and took refuge with a relation, where, instead of meeting with the protection I expected, I was alarmed with the most infamous designs upon my honour. It is not an hour ago, since your nephew rescued me from the attempts of a villain. I tremble to think, that I left him actually engaged in a duel.

*Oak.* He is very safe. He has just sent home the chariot from the St Alban's tavern, where he dines to-day. But what are your commands for me, madam?

*Har.* I am heartily glad to hear of his safety. The favour, sir, I would now request of you is, that you would suffer me to remain for a few days in your house.

*Oak.* Madam!

*Har.* And that, in the mean time, you will use your utmost endeavours to reconcile me to my father, without his forcing me into a marriage with sir Harry Beagle.

*Oak.* This is the most perplexing situation!—Why did not Charles take care to bestow you properly?

*Har.* It is most probable, sir, that I should not have consented to such a measure myself. The world is but too apt to censure, even without a cause: and, if you are so kind as to admit me into your house, I must desire not to consider Mr Oakly in any other light than as your nephew; as, in my present circumstances, I have particular objections to it.

*Oak.* What an unlucky circumstance!—Upon my soul, madam, I would do any thing to serve you!—but being in my house creates a difficulty, that——

*Har.* I hope, sir, you do not doubt the truth of what I have told you?

*Oak.* I religiously believe every tittle of it, madam; but I have particular family considerations, that———

*Har.* Sure, sir, you cannot suspect me to be base enough to form any connections in your family contrary to your inclinations, while I am living in your house?

*Oak.* Such connections, madam, would do me, and all my family, great honour. I never dreamt of any scruples on that account. What can I do? Let me see—let me see—suppose——— [*Pausing.*

*Enter* MRS OAKLY *behind, in a capuchin, tippet, &c.*

*Mrs Oak.* I am sure I heard the voice of a woman conversing with my husband———Ha! [*Seeing* HARRIOT.] It is so, indeed! Let me contain myself——I'll listen.

*Har.* I see, sir, you are not inclined to serve me—good Heaven! what I am reserved to?—Why, why did I leave my father's house to expose myself to greater distresses? [*Ready to weep.*

*Oak.* I would do any thing for your sake:—indeed I would. So, pray be comforted, and I'll think of some proper place to bestow you in

*Mrs Oak.* So! So!

*Har.* What place can be so proper as your own house?

*Oak.* My dear madam, I——I———

*Mrs Oak.* My dear madam——mighty well!

*Oak.* Hush! hark!——what noise——no——nothing. But I'll be plain with you, madam; we may be interrupted. The family consideration I hinted at, is nothing else than my wife. She is a little unhappy in her temper, madam! and if you was to be admitted into the house, I don't know what would be the consequence.

*Mrs Oak.* Very fine——

*Har.* My behaviour, sir——

*Oak.* My dear life, it would be impossible for you to behave in such a manner, as not to give her suspicion.

*Har.* But if your nephew, sir, took every thing upon himself———

*Oak.* Still that would not do, madam. Why this very morning, when the letter came from your father, though I positively denied any knowledge of it, and Charles owned it, yet it was almost impossible to pacify her.

*Mrs Oak.* The letter! How I have been bubbled!

*Har.* What shall I do? What will become of me?

*Oak.* Why, look'e, my dear madam, since my wife is so strong an objection, it is absolutely impossible for me to take you into my house. Nay, if I had not known she was gone out, just before you came, I should be uneasy at your being here even now. So we must manage as well as we can. I'll take a private lodging for you a little way off, unknown to Charles or my wife, or any body; and if Mrs Oakly should discover it at last, why the whole matter will light upon Charles, you know.

*Mrs Oak.* Upon Charles!

*Har.* How unhappy is my situation! [*Weeping.*] I am ruined for ever.

*Oak.* Ruined! Not at all. Such a thing as this has happened to many a young lady before you, and all has been well again——Keep up your spirits! I'll contrive, if I possibly can, to visit you every day.

*Mrs Oak.* [*Advancing.*] Will you so? O, Mr Oakly! have I discovered you at last? I'll visit you, indeed. And you, my dear madam, I'll—

*Har.* Madam, I don't understand——

*Mrs Oak.* I understand the whole affair, and have understood it for some time past. You shall have a private lodging, miss! It is the fittest place for you, I believe. How dare you look me in the face?

*Oak.* For Heaven's sake, my love, don't be so violent. You are quite wrong in this affair—you don't know who you are talking to. That lady is a person of fashion.

*Mrs Oak.* Fine fashion, indeed! to seduce other women's husbands!

*Har.* Dear madam! how can you imagine—

*Oak.* I tell you, my dear, this is the young lady that Charles——

*Mrs Oak.* Mighty well! but that won't do, sir! Did not I hear you lay the whole intrigue together? Did not I hear your fine plot of throwing all the blame upon Charles?

*Oak.* Nay, be cool a moment. You must know, my dear, that the letter which came this morning related to this lady——

*Mrs Oak.* I know it———

*Oak.* And since that, it seems, Charles has been so fortunate as to———

*Mrs Oak.* O, you deceitful man! That trick is too stale to pass again with me. It is plain, now, what you meant by your proposing to take her into the house this morning. But the gentlewoman could introduce herself, I see.

*Oak.* Fy! fy! my dear; she came on purpose to inquire for you.

*Mrs Oak.* For me! better and better! Did not she watch her opportunity, and come to you just as I went out? But I am obliged to you for your visit, madam. It is sufficiently paid. Pray, don't let me detain you.

*Oak.* For shame! for shame, Mrs Oakly!—How can you be so absurd? Is this proper behaviour to a lady of her character?

*Mrs Oak.* I have heard her character. Go, my fine run-away madam! Now, you've eloped from your family, and run away from your aunt! Go! You shan't stay here, I promise you.

*Oak.* Prithee, be quiet. You don't know what you are doing. She shall stay.

*Mrs Oak.* She shan't stay a minute.

*Oak.* She shall stay a minute, an hour, a day, a week, a month, a year! 'Sdeath, madam, she shall stay for ever, if I choose it.

*Mrs Oak.* How!

*Har.* For Heaven's sake, sir, let me go. I am frighted to death.

*Oak.* Don't be afraid, madam! She shall stay, I insist upon it.

*Rus.* [*Within.*] I tell you, sir, I will go up. I am sure the lady is here, and nothing shall hinder me.

*Har.* O my father! my father!

[*Faints away.*

*Oak.* See! she faints. [*Catching her.*] Ring the bell! Who's there?

*Mrs Oak.* What! take her into your arms, too! I have no patience.

*Enter* RUSSET *and Servants.*

*Rus.* Where is this——ha! fainting! [*Running to her.*] O my dear Harriot! my child! my child!

*Oak.* Your coming so abruptly shocked her spirits But she revives. How do you, madam?

*Har.* [*To* RUSSET.] O, sir!

*Rus.* O my dear girl! How could you run

away from your father, that loves you with such fondness———But I was sure I should find you here———

*Mrs Oak.* There—there! sure he should find her here! Did not I tell you so? Are not you a wicked man, to carry on such base underhand doings, with a gentleman's daughter?

*Rus.* Let me tell you, sir, whatever you may think of the matter, I shall not easily put up with this behaviour. How durst you encourage my daughter to an elopement, and receive her in your house.

*Mrs Oak.* There, mind that! The thing is as plain as the light.

*Oak.* I tell you, you misunderstand——

*Rus.* Look you, Mr Oakly, I shall expect satisfaction from your family for so gross an affront. Zounds, sir! I am not to be used ill by any man in England.

*Har.* My dear sir, I can assure you——

*Rus.* Hold your tongue, girl! You'll put me in a passion.

*Oak.* Sir, this is all a mistake.

*Rus.* A mistake! Did not I find her in your house?

*Oak.* Upon my soul, she has not been in my house above——

*Mrs Oak.* Did not I hear you say you would take her a lodging? a private lodging!

*Oak.* Yes, but that———

*Rus.* Has not this affair been carried on a long time in spite of my teeth?

*Oak.* I never troubled myself———

*Mrs Oak.* Never troubled yourself! Did not you insist on her staying in the house, whether I would or no?

*Oak.* No.

*Rus.* Did not you send me to meet her, when she came to town?

*Oak.* No.

*Mrs Oak.* Did not you deceive me about the letter this morning?

*Oak.* No—no—no—I tell you, no.

*Mrs Oak.* Yes—yes—yes——I tell you, yes.

*Rus.* Shan't I believe my own eyes?

*Mrs Oak.* Shan't I believe my own ears?

*Oak.* I tell you, you are both deceived.

*Rus.* Zounds, sir, I'll have satisfaction.

*Mrs Oak.* I'll stop these fine doings, I warrant you.

*Oak.* 'Sdeath, you will not let me speak—and you are both alike, I think. I wish you were married to one another with all my heart.

*Mrs Oak.* Mighty well! mighty well!

*Rus.* I shall soon find a time to talk with you.

*Oak.* Find a time to talk! you have talked enough now for all your lives.

*Mrs Oak.* Very fine! Come along, sir! Leave that lady with her father. Now she is in the properest hands.

*Oak.* I wish I could leave you in his hands. [*Going, returns.*] I shall follow you, madam! One word with you, sir!——The height of your passion, and Mrs Oakly's strange misapprehension of this whole affair, makes it impossible to explain matters to you at present. I will do it when you please, and how you please. [*Exit.*

*Rus.* Yes, yes; I'll have satisfaction.——So, madam! I have found you at last. You have made a fine confusion here!

*Har.* I have, indeed, been the innocent cause of a great deal of confusion.

*Rus.* Innocent!—What business had you to be running hither after———

*Har.* My dear sir, you misunderstand the whole affair. I have not been in this house half an hour.

*Rus.* Zounds, girl, don't put me in a passion!—You know I love you——but a lie puts me in a passion. But come along—we'll leave this house directly—[CHARLES *singing without.*] Heyday! what now?

*After a noise without, enter* CHARLES, *drunk.*

Cha. *But my wine neither nurses nor babies can bring,*
*And a big-bellied bottle's a mighty good thing.* [*Singing.*

What's here? a woman? Harriot! impossible! My dearest, sweetest Harriot! I have been looking all over the town for you, and at last——— when I was tired—and weary—and disappointed—why, then, the honest major and I sat down together to drink your health in pint bumpers. [*Running up to her.*

*Rus.* Stand off!——How dare you take any liberty with my daughter before me? Zounds, sir, I'll be the death of you!

*Cha.* Ha! 'Squire Russet, too!——You jolly old cock, how do you do?—But Harriot! my dear girl! [*Taking hold of her.*] My life, my soul, my———

*Rus.* Let her go, sir—come away, Harriot!—Leave him this instant, or I'll tear you asunder. [*Pulling her.*

*Har.* There needs no violence to tear me from a man who could disguise himself in such a gross manner, at a time when he knew I was in the utmost distress. [*Disengages herself, and exit with* RUS.

*Cha.* Only hear me, sir——madam!——my dear Harriot——Mr Russet——gone!——she's gone!—and, egad, in very ill humour, and in very bad company!——I'll go after her—but hold!—I shall only make it worse——as I did—now I recollect—once before. How the devil came they here?—Who would have thought of finding her in my own house?——My head turns round with conjectures.—I believe I am drunk—very drunk——so, egad, I'll e'en go and sleep myself sober, and then inquire the meaning of all this. For,

*I love Sue, and Sue loves me, &c.*

[*Exit singing.*

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.—OAKLY'S *house.*

*Enter* MRS OAKLY *and* MAJOR OAKLY.

*Maj.* WELL——well——but sister!

*Mrs Oak.* I will know the truth of this matter. Why can't you tell me the whole story?

*Maj.* I'll tell you nothing. There's nothing to tell—you know the truth already. Besides, what have I to do with it? Suppose there was a disturbance yesterday, what's that to me? was I here? it's no business of mine.

*Mrs Oak.* Then, why do you study to make it so? Am not I well assured that this mischief commenced at your house in the country? And now you are carrying it on in town.

*Maj.* This is always the case in family squabbles. My brother has put you out of humour, and you choose to vent your spleen upon me.

*Mrs Oak.* Because I know that you are the occasion of his ill-usage. Mr Oakly never behaved in such a manner before.

*Maj.* I? Am I the occasion of it?

*Mrs Oak.* Yes, you. I am sure on't.

*Maj.* I am glad on't with all my heart.

*Mrs Oak.* Indeed!

*Maj.* Ay, indeed: and you are the more obliged to me. Come, come, sister, it's time you should reflect a little. My brother is become a public jest; and, by and by, if this foolish affair gets wind, the whole family will be the subject of town-talk.

*Mrs Oak.* And well it may, when you take so much pains to expose us. The little disquiets and uneasiness of other families are kept secret; but here, quarrels are fomented, and afterwards industriously made public. And you, sir, you have done all this—you are my greatest enemy.

*Maj.* Your truest friend, sister.

*Mrs Oak.* But it's no wonder. You have no feelings of humanity, no sense of domestic happiness, no idea of tenderness, or attachment to any woman.

*Maj.* No idea of plague or disquiet—no, no—and yet I can love a woman for all that—heartily—as you say, tenderly——But then, I always chuse a woman should shew a little love for me, too.

*Mrs Oak.* Cruel insinuation!—But I defy your malice——Mr Oakly can have no doubt of my affection for him.

*Maj.* Nor I, neither; and yet your affection, such as it is, has all the evil properties of aversion. You absolutely kill him with kindness. Why, what a life he leads! He serves for nothing but a mere whetstone of your ill-humour.

*Mrs Oak.* Pray now, sir!——

*Maj.* The violence of your temper makes his house uncomfortable to him, poisons his meals, and breaks his rest.

*Mrs Oak.* I beg, Major Oakly, that———

*Maj.* This it is to have a wife that dotes upon one!—the least trifle kindles your suspicion; you take fire in an instant, and set the whole family in a blaze.

*Mrs Oak.* This is beyond all patience.—No, sir, 'tis you are the incendiary—you are the cause of—I can't bear such—[*ready to weep.*]—from this instant, sir, I forbid you my house. However Mr Oakly may treat me himself, I'll never be made the sport of all his insolent relations.

[*Exit* MRS OAK.

*Maj.* Yes, yes, I knew I should be turned out of doors. There she goes!——back again to my brother directly. Poor gentleman!——'Slife, if he was but half the man that I am, I'd engage to keep her going to and fro all day, like a shuttlecock.

*Enter* CHARLES.

What, Charles!

*Cha.* O major! have you heard of what happened after I left you yesterday?

*Maj.* Heard! Yes, yes, I have heard it plain enough. But poor Charles! Ha, ha, ha! What a scene of confusion! I would give the world to have been there.

*Cha.* And I would give the world to have been any where else. Cursed fortune!

*Maj.* To come in so opportunely at the tail of an adventure!——Was not your mistress mighty glad to see you? You was very fond of her, I dare say?

*Cha.* I am upon the rack. Who can tell what rudeness I might offer her! I can remember nothing—I deserve to lose her—to make myself a beast!—and at such a time, too!—O fool, fool, fool!

*Maj.* Prithee, be quiet, Charles!——Never vex yourself about nothing; this will all be made up the first time you see her.

*Cha.* I should dread to see her—and yet, the not knowing where she is, distracts me—her father may force her to marry sir Harry Beagle immediately.

*Maj.* Not he, I promise you. She'd run plump into your arms first, in spite of her father's teeth.

*Cha.* But then her father's violence, and the mildness of her disposition——

*Maj.* Mildness!—Ridiculous!—Trust to the spirit of the sex in her. I warrant you, like all the rest, she'll have perverseness enough not to do as her father would have her.

*Cha.* Well, well—But then my behaviour to her. To expose myself in such a condition to her again! The very occasion of our former quarrel!———

*Maj.* Quarrel! ha, ha, ha! What signifies a quarrel with a mistress? Why, the whole affair of making love, as they call it, is nothing but quarreling and making it up again. They quarrel on purpose to kiss and be friends.

*Cha.* Then, indeed, things seemed to be taking a fortunate turn——To renew our difference at such a time!——Just when I had some reason to hope for a reconciliation!——May wine be my poison, if ever I am drunk again!

*Maj.* Ay, ay; so every man says the next morning.

*Cha.* Where, where can she be? Her father would hardly carry her back to lady Freelove's, and he has no house in town himself, nor sir Harry——I don't know what to think——I'll go in search of her, though I don't know where to direct myself.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* A gentleman, sir, that calls himself Captain O'Cutter, desires to speak with you.

*Cha.* Don't trouble me——I'll see nobody—I'm not at home———

*Ser.* The gentleman says he has very particular business, and he must see you.

*Cha.* What's his name? Who did you say?

*Ser.* Captain O'Cutter, sir.

*Cha.* Captain O'Cutter! I never heard of him before. Do you know any thing of him, major?

*Maj.* Not I—But you hear he has particular business. I'll leave the room.

*Cha.* He can have no business that need be a secret to you——Desire the captain to walk up ——[*Exit Servant.*]——What would I give if this unknown captain was to prove a messenger from my Harriot!

*Enter* CAPTAIN O'CUTTER.

*O'Cut.* Jontlemen, your sarvant. Is either of your names Charles Oakly, esq.

*Cha.* Charles Oakly, sir, is my name, if you have any business with it.

*O'Cut.* Avast, avast, my dear!—I have a little business with your name, but as I was to let nobody know it, I can't mention it till you clear the decks, fait— [*Pointing to the major.*

*Cha.* This gentleman, sir, is my most intimate friend, and any thing that concerns me may be mentioned before him.

*O'Cut.* O, if he's your friend, my dear, we may do all above-board. Its only about your deciding a deferance with my lord Trinket. He wants to shew you a little warm work; and as I was steering this way, he desired me to fetch you this letter. [*Giving a letter.*]

*Maj.* How, sir, a challenge!

*O'Cut.* Yes, fait, a challenge. I am to be his lordship's second; and if you are fond of a hot birth, and will come along with that jontleman, we'll all go to it together, and make a little line of battle a-head of our own, my dear.

*Cha.* [*Reading.*] Ha! what's this? This may be useful. [*Aside.*

*Maj.* Sir, I am infinitely obliged to you—A rare fellow this! [*Aside.*] Yes, yes, I'll meet all the good company. I'll be there in my waistcoat and pumps, and take a morning's breathing with you. Are you very fond of fighting, sir?

*O'Cut.* Indeed and I am; I love it better than salt beef or biscuit.

*Maj.* But pray, sir, how are you interested in this difference? Do you know what it is about?

*O'Cut.* O, the devil burn me, not I. What signifies what its about, you know? so we do but tilt a little.

*Maj.* What! fight, and not know for what?

*O'Cut.* When the signal's out for engaging, what signifies talking?

*Maj.* I fancy, sir, a duel is a common breakfast with you? I'll warrant now you have been engaged in many such affairs.

*O'Cut.* Upon my shoul, and I have: sea or land, its all one to little Terence O'Cutter—— When I was last in Dublin, I fought one jontleman for cheating me out of a tousand pounds: I fought two of the Mermaid's crew about Sally Macguire; tree about politics; and one about the play-house in Smock-Alley. But upon my fait, since I am in England, I have done noting at all, at all.

*Cha.* This is lucky—but my transport will discover me. [*Aside.*] Will you be so kind, sir, [*To* O'CUTTER.] as to make my compliments to his lordship, and assure him that I shall do myself the honour of waiting on him.

*O'Cut.* Indeed and I will—Arrah, my dear, won't you come, too? [*To* MAJOR OAKLY.

*Maj.* Depend upon't. We'll go through the whole exercise: carte, tierce, and segoon, captain.

*Cha.* Now to get my intelligence. [*Aside.*] I think the time, sir, his lordship appoints in his letter, is—a———

*O'Cut.* You say right——Six o'clock.

*Cha.* And the place—a—a—is——I think, behind Montague-House?

*O'Cut.* No, my dear!——Avast, by the Ring in Hyde-Park, fait——I settled it there myself, for fare of interruption.

*Cha.* True, as you say, the Ring in Hyde-Park—I had forgot—Very well, I'll not fail you, sir.

*O'Cut.* Devil burn me, not I. Upon my shoul, little Terence O'Cutter will see fair play, or he'll know the reason——And so, my dear, your sarvant. [*Exit.*

*Maj.* Ha, ha, ha! What a fellow!—He loves fighting like a game-cock.

*Cha.* O uncle! the luckiest thing in the world!

*Maj.* What, to have the chance of being run through the body! I desire no such good fortune.

*Cha.* Wish me joy, wish me joy! I have found her, my dear girl, my Harriot!——She is at an inn in Holborn, major!

*Maj.* Ay! how do you know?

*Cha.* Why, this dear, delightful, charming, blundering captain, has delivered me a wrong letter.

*Maj.* A wrong letter!

*Cha.* Yes, a letter from lord Trinket to lady Freelove.

*Maj.* The devil! what are the contents?

*Cha.* The news I told you just now, that she's at an inn in Holborn:—and besides, an excuse from my lord, for not waiting on her ladyship this morning, according to his promise, as he shall be entirely taken up with his design upon Harriot.

*Maj.* So!—so!—A plot between the lord and the lady.

*Cha.* What his plot is, I don't know; but I shall beg leave to be made a party in it: so, perhaps his lordship and I may meet, and *decide* our *deferance*, as the captain calls it, before to-morrow morning——There! read, read, man!

[*Giving the letter.*

*Maj.* [*Reading.*] Um—um—um—very fine! And what do you propose doing?

*Cha.* To go thither immediately.

*Maj.* Then you shall take me with you. Who knows what his lordship's designs may be? I begin to suspect foul play.

*Cha.* No, no; pray mind your own business. If I find there is any need of your assistance, I'll send for you.

*Maj.* You'll manage this affair like a boy now—Go on rashly, with noise and bustle and fury, and get yourself into another scrape.

*Cha.* No—no—Let me alone; I'll go *incog.* Leave my chariot at some distance—Proceed prudently, and take care of myself, I warrant you. I did not imagine that I should ever rejoice at receiving a challenge; but this is the most fortunate accident that could possibly have happened. B'ye, b'ye, uncle! [*Exit hastily.*

*Maj.* I don't half approve of this—and yet I can hardly suspect his lordship of any very deep designs neither—Charles may easily outwit him. Hark ye, William!

[*Seeing a servant at some distance.*

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Sir!

*Maj.* Where's my brother?

*Ser.* In his study—alone, sir.

*Maj.* And how is he, William?

*Ser.* Pretty well, I believe, sir.

*Maj.* Ay, ay; but is he in good humour, or—

*Ser.* I never meddle in family affairs, not I, sir. [*Exit.*

*Maj.* Well said, William!——No bad hint for me, perhaps!—What a strange world we live in!—No two people in it love one another better than my brother and sister, and yet the bitterest enemies could not torment each other more heartily——Ah, if he had but half my spirit!—And yet he don't want it neither—But I know his temper—He pieces out the matter with maxims, and scraps of philosophy, and odds and ends of sentences—I must live in peace——Patience is the best remedy—Any thing for a quiet life! and so on——However, yesterday, to give him his due, he behaved like a man. Keep it up, brother! keep it up! or its all over with you. Since mischief is on foot, I'll even set it forwards on all sides. I'll in to him directly, read him one of my morning lectures, and persuade him, if I possibly can, to go out with me immediately; or work him up to some open act of rebellion against the sovereign authority of his lady-wife. Zounds, brother! rant, and roar, and rave, and turn the house out of the window. If I was a husband!——'Sdeath, what a pity it is, that nobody knows how to manage a wife but a batchelor! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to the Bull and Gate Inn.*

*Enter* HARRIOT.

*Har.* What will become of me? My father is enraged, and deaf to all remonstrances, and here I am to remain, by his positive orders, to receive this booby baronet's odious addresses.—Among all my distresses, I must confess that Charles's behaviour yesterday is not the least. So wild! so given up to excesses! And yet I am ashamed to own it even to myself—I love him: and death itself shall not prevail on me to give my hand to sir Harry.—But here he comes! What shall I do with him?

*Enter* SIR HARRY BEAGLE.

*Sir Har.* Your servant, miss!——What? Not speak!——Bashful, mayhap—Why, then, I will.—Look'e, miss, I am a man of few words.——What signifies haggling! It looks just like a dealer.—What d'ye think of me for a husband?—I am a tight young fellow—sound wind and limb—free from all natural blemishes—Rum all over, damme!

*Har.* Sir, I don't understand you. Speak English, and I'll give you an answer.

*Sir Har.* English! Why so I do—and good plain English, too.—What d'ye think of me for a husband?—That's English—a'nt it?-----I know none of your French lingo, none of your *parlyvoos*, not I.—What d'ye think of me for a husband? The 'squire says you shall marry me.

*Har.* What shall I say to him? I had best be civil. [*Aside.*]——I think, sir, you deserve a much better wife, and beg------

*Sir Har.* Better! No, no,—though you're so knowing, I'm not to be taken in so.—You're a fine thing------Your points are all good.

*Har.* Sir Harry! Sincerity is above all ceremony. Excuse me, if I declare I never will be your wife. And if you have a real regard for

me, and my happiness, you will give up all pretension to me. Shall I beseech you, sir, to persuade my father not to urge a marriage, to which I am determined never to consent?

*Sir Har.* Hey! how! what! be off!—Why, it's a match, miss!—It's done and done on both sides.

*Har.* For Heaven's sake, sir, withdraw your claim to me,———I never can be prevailed on——indeed I can't------

*Sir Har.* What, make a match, and then draw stakes! That's doing of nothing—Play or pay, all the world over.

*Har.* Let me prevail on you, sir!------I am determined not to marry you at all events.

*Sir Har.* But your father's determined you shall, miss; so the odds are on my side.------I am not quite sure of my horse, but I have the rider hollow.

*Har.* Your horse! Sir-----d'ye take me for—but I forgive you. I beseech you come into my proposal. It will be better for us both in the end.

*Sir Har.* I can't be off.

*Har.* Let me entreat you.

*Sir Har.* I tell you, it's unpossible.

*Har.* Pray, pray do, sir.

*Sir Har.* I can't, damme.

*Har.* I beseech you.

*Sir Har.* [*Whistles.*]

*Har.* How! laughed at?

*Sir Har.* *Will you marry me? Dear Ally, Ally Croker!* [*Singing.*

*Har.* Marry you? I had rather be married to a slave, a wretch------You! [*Walks about.*

*Sir Har.* A fine going thing.———She has a deal of foot——treads well upon her pasterns—goes above her ground——

*Har.* Peace, wretch!—Do you talk to me as if I were your horse?

*Sir Har.* Horse! Why not speak of my horse? If your fine ladies had half as many good qualities, they would be much better bargains.

*Har.* And if their wretches of husbands liked them half so well as they do their horses, they would lead better lives.

*Sir Har.* Mayhap so.——But what signifies talking to you?——The 'squire shall know your tricks———He'll doctor you.———I'll go and talk to him.

*Har.* Go any where, so that you go from me.

*Sir Har.* He'll break you in—If you won't go in a snaffle, you must be put in a curb——He'll break you, damme. [*Exit.*

*Har.* A wretch!—But I was to blame to suffer his brutal behaviour to ruffle my temper.—— I could expect nothing else from him, and he is below my anger.——How much trouble has this odious fellow caused, both to me and my poor father!—I never disobeyed him before, and my denial now makes him quite unhappy. In any thing else, I would be all submission; and even now, while I dread his rage, my heart bleeds for his uneasiness----I wish I could resolve to obey him.

*Enter* RUSSET.

*Rus.* Are not you a sad girl? a perverse, stubborn, obstinate-----

*Har.* My dear sir——

*Rus.* Look ye, Harriot, don't speak; you'll put me in a passion—Will you have him?—Answer me that—Why don't the girl speak? Will you have him?

*Har.* Dearest sir, there is nothing in the world else——

*Rus.* Why there! there! Look ye there!—— Zounds, you shall have him ——Hussy, you shall have him—You shall marry him to-night—Did not you promise to receive him civilly? How came you to affront him?

*Har.* Sir, I did receive him very civilly;—— but his behaviour was so insolent and insupportable———

*Rus.* Insolent! Zounds, I'll blow his brains out. Insolent to my dear Harriot! A rogue! a villain! a scoundrel! I'll—but it's a lie—I know it's a lie———He durst not behave insolent—Will you have him? Answer me that. Will you have him? Zounds, you shall have him.

*Har.* If you have any love for me, sir———

*Rus.* Love for you! You know I love you—You know your poor fond father dotes on you to madness. I would not force you, if I did not love you—Don't I want you to be happy? But I know what you would have. You want young Oakly, a rake-belly, drunken——

*Har.* Release me from sir Harry, and if I ever marry against your consent, renounce me for ever.

*Rus.* I will renounce you, unless you'll have sir Harry.

*Har.* Consider, my dear sir, you'll make me miserable. I would die to please you, but cannot prostitute my hand to a man my heart abhors. Absolve me from this hard command, and in every thing else it will be my happiness to obey you.

*Rus.* You'll break my heart, Harriot; you'll break my heart———Make you miserable!—Don't I want to make you happy? Is not he the richest man in the county? That will make you happy. Don't all the pale-faced girls in the country long to get him? And yet you are so perverse, and wayward, and stubborn—Zounds, you shall have him!

*Har.* For Heaven's sake, sir———

*Rus.* Hold your tongue, Harriot! I'll hear none of your nonsense. You shall have him, I tell you, you shall have him—He shall marry you this very night———I'll go for a licence and a parson immediately. Zounds! Why do I stand arguing with you? An't I your father? Have

not I a right to dispose of you? You shall have him.

*Har.* Sir!———

*Rus.* I won't hear a word. You shall have him. [*Exit.*

*Har.* Sir! Hear me! but one word! He will not hear me, and is gone to prepare for this odious marriage. I will die before I consent to it. You shall have him! O that fathers would enforce their commands by better arguments!—And yet I pity him, while he afflicts me. He upbraided me with Charles; his wildness and intemperance—Alas! but too justly—I see that he is wedded to his excesses; and I ought to conquer an affection for him, which will only serve to make me unhappy.

*Enter* CHARLES, *in a frock, &c.*

Ha! What do I see! [*Screaming.*

*Cha.* Peace, my love! My dear life, make no noise! I have been hovering about the house this hour—I just now saw your father and sir Harry go out, and have seized this precious opportunity to throw myself at your feet.

*Har.* You have given yourself, sir, a great deal of needless trouble. I did not expect, or hope, for the favour of such a visit.

*Cha.* O my dear Harriot, your words and looks cut me to the soul. You can't imagine what I suffer, and have suffered since last night. And yet I have, in some fond moments, flattered myself, that the service I was so fortunate as to do you at lady Freelove's, would plead a little in my favour.

*Har.* You may remember, sir, that you took a very early opportunity of cancelling that obligation.

*Cha.* I do remember it with shame and despair. But may I perish, if my joy at having delivered you from a villain was not the cause! My transport more than half intoxicated me, and wine made an easy conquest over me. I tremble to think, lest I should have behaved in such a manner as you cannot pardon.

*Har.* Whether I pardon you or no, sir, is a matter of mighty little consequence.

*Cha.* O, my Harriot! Upbraid me, reproach me; do any thing but look and talk with that air of coldness and indifference. Must I lose you for one offence? when my soul dotes on you, when I love you to distraction!

*Har.* Did it appear like love, your conduct yesterday? To lose yourself in riot, when I was exposed to the greatest distresses!

*Cha.* I feel, I feel my shame, and own it.

*Har.* You confess that you don't know in what manner you behaved. Ought not I to tremble at the very thoughts of a man, devoted to a vice, which renders him no longer a judge or master of his own conduct?

*Char.* Abandon me, if ever I am guilty of it again. O, Harriot! I am distracted with ten thousand fears and apprehensions of losing you for ever—The chambermaid, whom I bribed to admit me to you, told me, that when the two gentlemen went out, they talked of a license. What am I to think! Is it possible that you can resign yourself to sir Harry Beagle? [HARRIOT *pauses.*] Can you, then, consent to give your hand to another? No, let me once more deliver you——— Let us seize this lucky moment! My chariot stands at the corner of the next street. Let me gently force you, while their absence allows it, and convey you from the brutal violence of a constrained marriage.

*Har.* No! I will wait the event, be it what it may. O, Charles, I am too much inclined——They shan't force me to marry sir Harry——But your behaviour——Not half an hour ago, my father reproached me with the looseness of your character. [*Weeping.*

*Cha.* I see my folly, and am ashamed of it.—You have reclaimed me, Harriot! On my soul, you have. If all women were as attentive as yourself to the morals of their lovers, a libertine would be an uncommon character. But let me persuade you to leave this place, while you may—Major Oakly will receive us at his house with pleasure—I am shocked at the thoughts of what your stay here may reserve you to.

*Har.* No, I am determined to remain——To leave my father again, to go off openly with a man, of whose libertine character he has himself so lately been a witness, would justify his anger, and impeach my reputation.

*Cha.* Fool! fool! How unhappy have I made myself! Consider, my Harriot, the peculiarity of your situation; besides, I have reason to fear other designs against you.

*Har.* From other designs I can be no where so secure as with my father.

*Cha.* Time flies———Let me persuade you!

*Har.* I am resolved to stay here.

*Cha.* You distract me. For Heaven's sake.—

*Har.* I will not think of it.

*Cha.* Consider, my angel!——

*Har.* I do consider, that your conduct has made it absolutely improper for me to trust myself to your care.

*Cha.* My conduct! Vexation! 'Sdeath! But, then, my dear Harriot, the danger you are in, the necessity———

*Enter Chambermaid.*

*Cham.* O law, ma'am! Such a terrible accident! As sure as I am here, there's a press-gang has seized the two gemmin, and is carrying them away, thof so be one an 'em says as how he's a knight and baronight, and that t'other's a 'squire and a housekeeper.

*Har.* Seized by a press gang! impossible.

*Cha.* O, now the design comes out. But I'll baulk his lordship.

*Cham.* Lack-a-dasy, ma'am, what can we do?

There is master, and John Ostler, and Bootcatcher, all gone a'ter 'em. There is such an uproar as never was. [*Exit.*

*Har.* If I thought this was your contrivance, sir, I would never speak to you again.

*Cha.* I would sooner die than be guilty of it. This is lord Trinket's doing, I am sure. I knew he had some scheme in agitation, by a letter I intercepted this morning.

*Har.* [*Screams.*]

*Cha.* Ha! Here he comes. Nay, then, 'tis plain enough. Don't be frighted, my love! I'll protect you. But, now, I must desire you to follow my directions.

*Enter* LORD TRINKET.

*Lord Trink.* Now, madam. Pox on't, he here, again! Nay, then—[*Drawing.*]—Come, sir! You're unarmed, I see. Give up the lady: give her up, I say, or I am through you in a twinkling. [*Going to make a pass at* CHA.

*Cha.* Keep your distance, my lord! I have arms.—[*Producing a pistol.*]—If you come a foot nearer, you have a brace of balls through your lordship's head.

*Lord Trink.* How? what's this? pistols!

*Cha.* At your lordship's service. Sword and pistol, my lord. Those, you know, are our weapons. If this misses, I have the fellow to't in my pocket. Don't be frighted, madam. His lordship has removed your friends and relations, but he will take great care of you. Shall I leave you with him?

*Har.* Cruel Charles! You know I must go with you now.

*Cha.* A little way from the door, if your lordship pleases. [*Waving his hand.*

*Lord Trink.* Sir!—'Sdeath!—Madam!——

*Cha.* A little more round, my lord. [*Waving.*

*Lord Trink.* But, sir! Mr Oakly!

*Cha.* I have no leisure to talk with your lordship now. A little more that way, if you please. —[*Waving.*]—You know where I live. If you have any commands for Miss Russet, you will hear of her, too, at my house. Nay, keep back, my lord.—[*Presenting.*]—Your lordship's most obedient humble servant.

[*Exit* CHA. *with* HAR.

*Lord Trink.* [*Looking after them, and pausing for a short time.*]—I cut a mighty ridiculous figure here, 'pon honour. So! I have been concerting this deep scheme, merely to serve him.—Oh, the devil take such intrigues, and all silly country girls, that can give up a man of quality and figure, for a fellow that nobody knows! [*Exit.*

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—LADY FREELOVE'S *house.*

*Enter* LORD TRINKET, LADY FREELOVE *with a letter, and* CAPTAIN O'CUTTER.

*Lord Trink.* WAS ever any thing so unfortunate? Pox on't, captain, how could you make such a strange blunder?

*O'Cut.* I never tought of a blunder. I was to daliver two letters, and, if I gave them one apiece, I tought it was all one, fait.

*Lady Free.* And so, my lord, the ingenious captain gave the letter intended for me to young Oakly, and here he has brought me a challenge.

*Lord Trink.* Ridiculous! never was any thing so mal-a-propos. Did you read the direction, captain!

*O'Cut.* Who, me! Devil burn me, not I. I never rade at all.

*Lord Trink.* 'Sdeath! How provoking! When I had secured the servants, and got all the people out of the way——When every thing was *en train.*

*Lady Free.* Nay, never despair, my lord! Things have happened unluckily, to be sure; and yet I think I could hit upon a method to set every thing to right again.

*Lord Trink.* How? How? my dear lady Freelove, how?

*Lady Free.* Suppose, then, your ladyship was to go and deliver these country gentlemen from their confinement; make them believe it was a plot of young Oakly's to carry off my niece; and so make a merit of your own services with the father.

*Lord Trink.* Admirable! I'll about it immediately.

*O'Cut.* Has your lordship any occasion for my services in this expedition?

*Lord Trink.* O no: only release me these people, and then keep out of the way, dear captain.

*O'Cut.* With all my heart, fait. But you are all wrong: this will not signify a brass farding. If you would let me alone, I would give him a salt eel, I warrant you. But, upon my credit, there's noting to be done without a little tilting. [*Exit* O'CUT.

*Lady Free.* Ha, ha! poor captain!

*Lord Trink.* But where shall I carry them, when I have delivered them?

*Lady Free.* To Mr Oakly's, by all means.—You may be sure my niece is there.

*Lord Trink.* To Mr Oakly's! Why, does your ladyship consider? 'Tis going directly in the fire of the enemy——throwing the *dementi* full in their teeth.

*Lady Free.* So much the better. Face your enemies: nay, you shall outface them, too. Why, where's the difference between truths and untruths, if you do but stick close to the point?

Falsehood would scarce ever be detected, if we had confidence enough to support it.

*Lord Trink.* Nay, I don't want bronze upon occasion. But to go amongst a whole troop of people, sure, to contradict every word I say, is so dangerous——

*Lady Free.* To leave Russet alone amongst them, would be ten times more dangerous. You may be sure that Oakly's will be the first place he will go to after his daughter, where, if you don't accompany him, he will be open to all their suggestions. They'll be all in one story, and nobody there to contradict them: and then their dull truth would triumph, which must not be.—No, no—positively, my lord, you must battle it out.

*Lord Trink.* Well, I'll go, 'pon honour—and, if I could depend on your ladyship as a corps de reserve———

*Lady Free.* I'll certainly meet you there.—Tush! my lord, there's nothing in it. It's hard, indeed, if two persons of condition cannot bear themselves out against such trumpery folks as the family of the Oaklys.

*Lord Trink.* Odious low people! But I lose time—I must after the captain—and so, till we meet at Mr Oakly's, I kiss your ladyship's hand. You won't fail me?

*Lady Free.* You may depend on me.

[*Exit* LORD TRINK.

*Lady Free.* So, here is fine work! this artful little hussy has been too much for us all: well, what's to be done? Why, when a woman of fashion gets into a scrape, nothing but a fashionable assurance can get her out of it again. I'll e'en go boldly to Mr Oakly's, as I have promised, and, if it appears practicable, I will forward lord Trinket's match; but, if I find that matters have taken another turn, his lordship must excuse me. In that case, I'll fairly drop him, seem a perfect stranger to all his intentions, and give my visit an air of congratulation to my niece and any other husband, which fortune, her wise father, or her ridiculous self, has provided for her. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* MRS OAKLY'S *dressing-room.*

*Enter* MRS OAKLY.

*Mrs Oak.* This is worse and worse! He never held me so much in contempt before. To go out without speaking to me, or taking the least notice! I am obliged to the major for this. How could he take him out? And how could Mr Oakly go with him?

*Enter* TOILET.

Well, Toilet?

*Toil.* My master is not come back yet, madam.

*Mrs Oak.* Where is he gone?

*Toil.* I don't know, I can assure your ladyship.

*Mrs Oak.* Why, don't you know? You know nothing. But I warrant you know well enough, if you would tell. You shall never persuade me but you knew of Mr Oakly's going out to-day.

*Toil.* I wish I may die, madam, upon my honour, and I protest to your ladyship, I knew nothing in the world of the matter, no more than the child unborn. There is Mr Paris, my master's gentleman, knows——

*Mrs Oak.* What does he know?

*Toil.* That I knew nothing at all of the matter.

*Mrs Oak.* Where is Paris? What is he doing?

*Toil.* He is in my master's room, madam.

*Mrs Oak.* Bid him come here.

*Toil.* Yes, madam. [*Exit* TOIL.

*Mrs Oak.* He is certainly gone after this young flirt. His confidence, and the major's insolence, provoke me beyond expression.

*Re-enter* TOILET *with* PARIS.

Where's your master?

Par. *Il est sorti.*

*Mrs Oak.* Where is he gone?

*Par.* Ah, madame, *je n'en scai rien.* I know noting of it.

*Mrs Oak.* Nobody knows any thing. Why did not you tell me he was going out?

*Par.* I dress him—*Je ne m'en soucie pas du plus*—He go where he will——I have no bisnes wis it.

*Mrs Oak.* Yes, you should have told me——that was your business——and if you don't mind your business better, you shan't stay here, I can tell you, sir.

*Par. Voila! quelque chose d'extraordinaire!*

*Mrs Oak.* Don't stand jabbering and shrugging your shoulders, but go, and inquire—go—and bring me word where he is gone.

*Par.* I don't know what I am do.——I'll ask John.——

*Mrs Oak.* Bid John come to me.

*Par. De tout mon cœur.—Jean! ici! Jean*—Speak my ladi. [*Exit.*

*Mrs Oak.* Impudent fellow! His insolent gravity and indifference is insupportable———Toilet!

*Toil.* Madam?

*Mrs Oak.* Where's John? Why don't he come? Why do you stand with your hands before you? Why don't you fetch him?

*Toil.* Yes, madam, I'll go this minute.——O, here, John! my lady wants you.

*Enter* JOHN.

*Mrs Oak.* Where's your master?

*John.* Gone out, madam.

*Mrs Oak.* Why did not you go with him?

*John.* Because he went out in the major's chariot, madam.

*Mrs Oak.* Where did they go to?

*John.* To the major's, I suppose, madam.

*Mrs Oak.* Suppose! Don't you know?

*John.* I believe so, but can't tell for certain, indeed, madam.

*Mrs Oak.* Believe, and suppose!---and don't know, and can't tell!——You are all fools.——Go about your business. [JOHN *going.*]—Come here. [*Returns.*] Go the major's---no---it does not signify——go along---[JOHN *going.*]---Yes, hark'e, [*Returns.*] go to the major's, and see if your master is there.

*John.* Give your compliments, madam?

*Mrs Oak.* My compliments, blockhead! Get along! [JOHN *going.*] Come hither. [*Returns.*] Can't you go to the major's, and bring me word if Mr Oakly is there, without taking any further notice?

*John.* Yes, madam.

*Mrs Oak.* Well, why don't you go, then? And make haste back.——And d'ye hear, John? [JOHN *going, returns.*

*John.* Madam?

*Mrs Oak.* Nothing at all—go along—[JOHN *goes.*]—How uneasy Mr Oakly makes me!——Hark'e, John! [JOHN *returns.*]

*John.* Madam!

*Mrs Oak.* Send the porter here.

*John.* Yes, madam. [*Exit.*

*Toil.* So, she's in a rare humour! I shall have a fine time on't.—[*Aside.*]——Will your ladyship choose to dress?

*Mrs Oak.* Prithee, creature, don't tease me with your fiddle-faddle stuff—I have a thousand things to think of.——Where is the porter? Why has not that booby sent him? What is the meaning——

*Re-enter* JOHN.

*John.* Madam, my master is this moment returned with Major Oakly, and my young master, and the lady that was here yesterday.

*Mrs Oak.* Very well. [*Exit* JOHN.] Returned!—yes, truly, he is returned—and in a very extraordinary manner. This is setting me at open defiance. But I'll go down, and shew them I have too much spirit to endure such usage. —[*Going.*]—Or stay—I'll not go amongst his company—I'll go out.——Toilet!

*Toil.* Madam!

*Mrs Oak.* Order the coach, I'll go out. [TOILET *going.*]——Toilet, stay,—I'll e'en go down to them——No——Toilet!

*Toil.* Madam!

*Mrs Oak.* Order me a boiled chicken——I'll not go down to dinner——I'll dine in my own room, and sup there——I'll not see his face these three days. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to another room.*

*Enter* OAKLY, MAJOR OAKLY, CHARLES, *and* HARRIOT.

*Cha.* My dear Harriot, do not make yourself so uneasy.

*Har.* Alas! I have too much cause for my uneasiness. Who knows what that vile lord has done with my father?

*Oak.* Be comforted, madam; we shall soon hear of Mr Russet, and all will be well, I dare say.

*Har.* You are too good to me, sir:——But I can assure you, I am not a little concerned on your account, as well as my own; and if I did not flatter myself with hopes of explaining every thing to Mrs Oakly's satisfaction, I should never forgive myself for having disturbed the peace of such a worthy family.

*Maj.* Don't mind that, madam; They'll be very good friends again. This is nothing among married people.——'Sdeath, here she is!—No, —it's only Mrs Toilet.

*Enter* TOILET.

*Oak.* Well, Toilet, what now? [TOILET *whispers.*] Not well?—Can't come down to dinner?—Wants to see me above?—Hark'e, brother, what shall I do?

*Maj.* If you go, you're undone.

*Har.* Go, sir; go to Mrs Oakly—Indeed you had better——

*Maj.* 'Sdeath, brother! don't budge a foot—This is all fractiousness and ill humour——

*Oak.* No, I'll not go.—Tell her I have company, and we shall be glad to see her here. [*Exit* TOILET.

*Maj.* That's right.

*Oak.* Suppose I go, and watch how she proceeds?

*Maj.* What d'ye mean? You would not go to her? Are you mad?

*Oak.* By no means go to her---I only want to know how she takes it. I'll lie *perdue* in my study, and observe her motions.

*Maj.* I don't like this pitiful ambuscade-work —this bush-fighting. Why can't you stay here? —Ay, ay!—I know how it will be—She'll come bounce in upon you with a torrent of anger and passion, or, if necessary, a whole flood of tears, and carry all before her at once.

*Oak.* You shall find that you're mistaken, major.—Don't imagine, that, because I wish not to be void of humanity, that I am destitute of resolution. Now I am convinced I'm in the right, I'll support that right with ten times your steadiness.

*Maj.* You talk this well, brother.

*Oak.* I'll do it well, brother.

*Maj.* If you don't, you're undone.

*Oak.* Never fear, never fear. [*Exit.*

*Maj.* Well, Charles.

*Cha.* I can't bear to see my Harriot so uneasy. I'll go immediately in quest of Mr Russet. Perhaps, I may learn at the inn where his lordship's ruffians have carried him.

*Rus.* [*Without.*] Here? Yes, yes, I know she's

here well enough. Come along, sir Harry, come along.

*Har.* He's here!—My father! I know his voice. Where is Mr Oakly? O, now, good sir, [*To the* MAJOR.] do but pacify him, and you'll be a friend indeed.

*Enter* RUSSET, LORD TRINKET, *and* SIR HARRY BEAGLE.

*Lord Trink.* There, sir——I told you it was so.

*Rus.* Ay, ay, it is too plain.—O you provoking slut! Elopement after elopement! And at last to have your father carried off by violence! To endanger my life! Zounds! I am so angry. I dare not trust myself within reach of you.

*Cha.* I can assure you, sir, that your daughter is entirely———

*Rus.* You assure me? You are the fellow that has perverted her mind———That has set my own child against me———

*Cha.* If you will but hear me, sir———

*Rus.* I won't hear a word you say. I'll have my daughter——I won't hear a word.

*Maj.* Nay, Mr Russet, hear reason. If you will but have patience———

*Rus.* I'll have no patience——I'll have my daughter, and she shall marry sir Harry to-night.

*Lord Trink.* That is dealing rather too much *en cavalier* with me, Mr Russet, 'pon honour. You take no notice of my pretensions, though my rank and family———

*Rus.* What care I for rank and family? I don't want to make my daughter a rantipole woman of quality. I'll give her to whom I please. Take her away, sir Harry; she shall marry you to-night.

*Har.* For Heaven's sake, sir, hear me but a moment!

*Rus.* Hold your tongue, girl. Take her away, sir Harry; take her away.

*Cha.* It must not be.

*Maj.* Only three words, Mr Russet!

*Rus.* Why don't the booby take her?

*Sir Har.* Hold hard, hold hard! You are all on a wrong scent: Hold hard! I say, hold hard! —Hark ye, squire Russet.

*Rus.* Well! what now?

*Sir Har.* It was proposed, you know, to match me with Miss Harriot——But she can't take kindly to me. When one has made a bad bet, it is best to hedge off, you know—and so I have e'en swopped her with Lord Trinket here for his brown horse Nabob, that he bought of Lord Whistle-Jacket for fifteen hundred guineas.

*Rus.* Swopped her? Swopped my daughter for a horse? Zouns, sir, what d'ye mean?

*Sir Har.* Mean? Why, I mean to be off, to be sure—It won't do—I tell you, it won't do——First of all, I knocked up myself and my horses, when they took for London—and now I have been stewed aboard a tender——I have wasted three stone at least——If I could have rid my match, it would not have grieved me——And so, as I said before, I have swopped her for Nabob.

*Rus.* The devil take Nabob, and yourself, and Lord Trinket, and———

*Lord Trink. Pardon! je vous demande pardon,* Monsieur Russet, 'pon honour.

*Rus.* Death and the devil! I shall go distracted. My daughter plotting against me—the——

*Maj.* Come, come, Mr Russet, I am your man after all. Give me but a moment's hearing, and I'll engage to make peace between you and your daughter, and throw the blame where it ought to fall most deservedly.

*Sir Har.* Ay, ay, that's right. Put the saddle on the right horse, my buck!

*Rus.* Well, sir!—What d'ye say?—Speak——I don't know what to do———

*Maj.* I'll speak the truth, let who will be offended by it. I have proof presumptive and positive for you, Mr Russet. From his lordship's behaviour at lady Freelove's, when my nephew rescued her, we may fairly conclude, that he would stick at no measures to carry his point. There's proof presumptive. But, sir, we can give you proof positive, too—proof under his lordship's own hand, that he, likewise, was the contriver of the gross affront that has just been offered you.

*Rus.* Hey! how?

*Lord Trink.* Every syllable romance, 'pon honour.

*Maj.* Gospel, every word on't.

*Cha.* This letter will convince you, sir!—In consequence of what happened at lady Freelove's, his lordship thought fit to send me a challenge: but the messenger blundered, and gave me this letter instead of it. [*Giving the letter.*] I have the case which inclosed it in my pocket.

*Lord Trink.* Forgery, from beginning to end, 'pon honour.

*Maj.* Truth, upon my honour. But read, read, Mr Russet, read, and be convinced.

*Rus.* Let me see—let me see——[*Reading.*]—Um—um—um—um—so, so!—um—um—um—damnation!—Wish me success—obedient slave—Trinket.——Fire and fury! How dare you do this?

*Lord Trink.* When you are cool, Mr Russet, I will explain this matter to you.

*Rus.* Cool! 'Sdeath and hell!—I'll never be cool again—I'll be revenged.—So my Harriot, my dear girl, is innocent at last. Say so, my Harriot; tell me you are innocent! [*Embracing her.*

*Har.* I am, indeed, sir; and happy beyond expression, at your being convinced of it.

*Rus.* I am glad on't—I'm glad on't—I believe you, Harriot! You was always a good girl.

*Maj.* So she is, an excellent girl!—Worth a regiment of such lords and baronets—Come, sir, finish every thing handsomely at once. Come—Charles will have a handsome fortune.

*Rus.* Marry!—She durst not do it.

*Maj.* Consider, sir, they have long been fond of each other—old acquaintance—faithful lovers—turtles—and may be very happy.

*Rus.* Well, well—since things are so—I love my girl. Hark'e, young Oakly, if you don't make her a good husband, you'll break my heart, you rogue.

*Cha.* Do not doubt it, sir! my Harriot has reformed me altogether.

*Rus.* Has she?—Why then—there—Heaven bless you both—there—now, there's an end on't.

*Sir Har.* So, my lord, you and I are both distanced—A hollow thing, damme!

*Lord Trink. N'importe.*

*Sir Har.* [*Aside.*] Now this stake is drawn, my lord may be for hedging off mayhap. Ecod! I'll go to Jack Speed's, and secure Nabob, and be out of town in an hour. Soho! Lady Freelove! Yoics! [*Exit.*

*Enter* LADY FREELOVE.

*Lady Free.* My dear Miss Russet, you'll excuse———

*Cha.* Mrs Oakly, at your ladyship's service.

*Lady Free.* Married?

*Har.* Not yet, madam; but my father has been so good as to give his consent.

*Lady Free.* I protest I am prodigiously glad of it. My dear, I give you joy—and you, Mr Oakly. I wish you joy, Mr Russet, and all the good company—for I think the most of them are parties concerned.

*Maj.* How easy, impudent, and familiar! [*Aside.*

*Lady Free.* Lord Trinket here, too! I vow I did not see your lordship before.

*Lord Trink.* Your ladyship's most obedient slave. [*Bowing.*

*Lady Free.* You seem grave, my lord!—Come, come, I know there has been some difference between you and Mr Oakly—You must give me leave to be a mediator in this affair.

*Lord Trink.* Here has been a small fracas to be sure, madam!—We are all blown, 'pon honour.

*Lady Free.* Blown! What do you mean, my lord?

*Lord Trink.* Nay, your ladyship knows that I never mind these things, and I know that they never discompose your ladyship—But things have happened a little *en travers*—The little billet I sent your ladyship has fallen into the hands of that gentleman—[*Pointing to* CHARLES]—and so—there has been a little *brouillerie* about it—that's all.

*Lady Free.* You talk to me, my lord, in a very extraordinary style—If you have been guilty of any misbehaviour, I am sorry for it; but your ill conduct can fasten no imputation on me. Miss Russet will justify me sufficiently.

*Maj.* Had not your ladyship better appeal to my friend Charles here?—The letter! Charles! Out with it this instant!

*Cha.* Yes, I have the credentials of her ladyship's integrity in my pocket.——Mr Russet, the letter you read a little while ago was inclosed in this cover, which also I now think it my duty to put into your hands.

*Rus.* [*Reading.*] 'To the right honourable la-'dy Freelove——'Sdeath and hell!—and now I recollect, the letter itself was pieced with scraps of French, and madam, and your ladyship—Fire and fury! madam, how came you to use me so? I am obliged to you, then, for the insult that has been offered me?

*Lady Free.* What is all this? Your obligations to me, Mr Russet, are of a nature that———

*Rus.* Fine obligations! I dare say I am partly obliged to you, too, for the attempt on my daughter, by that thing of a lord yonder at your house. Zouns! madam, these are injuries never to be forgiven———They are the grossest affronts to me and my family—All the word shall know them—Zouns!—I'll———

*Lady Free.* Mercy on me! how boisterous are these country gentlemen! Why really, Mr Russet, you rave like a man in Bedlam—I am afraid you'll beat me—and then you swear most abominably. How can you be so vulgar?—I see the meaning of this low malice——But the reputations of women of quality are not so easily impeached—My rank places me above the scandal of little people, and I shall meet such petty insolence with the greatest ease and tranquillity. But you and your simple girl will be the sufferers. I had some thoughts of introducing her into the first company—But now, madam, I shall neither receive, nor return your visits, and will entirely withdraw my protection from the ordinary part of the family. [*Exit.*

*Rus.* Zouns, what impudence! that's worse than all the rest.

*Lord Trink.* Fine presence of mind, faith!—The true French *nonchalance*—But, good folks, why such a deal of rout and *tapage* about nothing at all?—If Mademoiselle Harriot had rather be Mrs Oakly than lady Trinket—Why, I wish her joy, that's all. Mr Russet, I wish you joy of your son-in-law—Mr Oakly, I wish you joy of the lady—and you, madam, [*To* HARRIOT.] of the gentleman—And, in short, I wish you all joy of one another, 'pon honour! [*Exit.*

*Rus.* There's a fine fellow of a lord now! The devil's in your London folks of the first fashion, as you call them. They will rob you of your estate, debauch your neighbour, or lie with your wife—and all as if they were doing you a favour, 'pon honour!

*Maj.* Hey! what now?

[*Bell rings violently.*

*Enter* OAKLY.

*Oak.* D'ye, hear, major? d'ye hear?

*Maj.* Zounds! what a clatter! She'll pull down all the bells in the house.

*Oak.* My observations, since I left you, have confirmed my resolution. I see plainly, that her good-humour, and her ill-humour, her smiles, her tears, and her fits, are calculated to play upon me.

*Maj.* Did not I always tell you so? It's the way with them all—they will be rough and smooth, and hot and cold, and all in a breath.—Any thing to get the better of us.

*Oak.* She is in all moods at present, I promise you—I am at once angry and ashamed of her; and yet she is so ridiculous, I can't help laughing at her——There has she been in her chamber, fuming and fretting, and dispatching a messenger to me every two minutes—servant after servant—now she insists on my coming to her—now, again, she writes a note to entreat—then, Toilet is sent to let me know that she is ill, absolutely dying—then, the very next minute, she'll never see my face again—she'll go out of the house directly. [*Bell rings.*] Again! now the storm rises!

*Maj.* It will soon drive this way, then—now, brother, prove yourself a man—You have gone too far to retreat.

*Oak.* Retreat!——Retreat!——No, no!—I'll preserve the advantage I have gained, I am determined.

*Maj.* Ay, ay! keep your ground! fear nothing—up with your noble heart! Good discipline makes good soldiers; stick close to my advice, and you may stand buff to a tigress——

*Oak.* Here she is, by Heavens!—now, brother!

*Maj.* And now, brother! Now or never!

*Enter* MRS OAKLY.

*Mrs Oak.* I think, Mr Oakly, you might have had humanity enough to have come to see how I did. You have taken your leave, I suppose, of all tenderness and affection—but I'll be calm—I'll not throw myself into a passion—you want to drive me out of your house—I see what you aim at, and will be aforehand with you—let me keep my temper! I'll send for a chair, and leave the house this instant.

*Oak.* True, my love! I knew you would not think of dining in your chamber alone, when I had company below. You shall sit at the head of the table, as you ought, to be sure, as you say, and make my friends welcome.

*Mrs Oak.* Excellent raillery! Look ye, Mr Oakly, I see the meaning of all this affected coolness and indifference.

*Oak.* My dear, consider where you are——

*Mrs Oak.* You would be glad, I find, to get me out of your house, and have all your flirts about you.

*Oak.* Before all this company! Fy!

*Mrs Oak.* But I'll disappoint you, for I shall remain in it to support my due authority—as for you, major Oakly!——

*Maj.* Hey-day! What have I done?

*Mrs Oak.* I think you might find better employment, than to create divisions between married people——and you, sir——

*Oak.* Nay, but, my dear!

*Mrs Oak.* Might have more sense, as well as tenderness, than to give ear to such idle stuff.—

*Oak.* Lord, lord!

*Mrs Oak.* You, and your wise counsellor there, I suppose, think to carry all your points with me.

*Oak.* Was ever any thing——

*Mrs Oak.* But it won't do, sir. You shall find that I will have my own way, and that I will govern my own family.

*Oak.* You had better learn to govern yourself by half. Your passion makes you ridiculous.—Did ever any body see so much fury and violence? affronting your best friends, breaking my peace, and disconcerting your own temper. And all for what? For nothing. 'Sdeath, madam! at these years, you ought to know better.

*Mrs Oak.* At these years! Very fine!——Am I to be talked to in this manner?

*Oak.* Talked to! Why not? You have talked to me long enough—almost talked me to death—and I have taken it all in hopes of making you quiet—but all in vain; for the more one bears, the worse you are. Patience, I find, is all thrown away upon you; and henceforward, come what may, I am resolved to be master of my own house.

*Mrs Oak.* So, so! Master, indeed! Yes, sir, and you'll take care to have mistresses enough, too, I warrant you.

*Oak.* Perhaps I may; but they shall be quiet ones, I can assure you.

*Mrs Oak.* Indeed! And do you think I am such a tame fool as to sit quietly and bear all this? You shall know, sir, that I will resent this behaviour——You shall find that I have a spirit——

*Oak.* Of the devil.

*Mrs Oak.* Intolerable! You shall find, then, that I will exert that spirit. I am sure I have need of it. As soon as the house is once cleared again, I'll shut my doors against all company. You shan't see a single soul for this month.

*Oak.* 'Sdeath, madam, but I will! I'll keep open house for a year. I'll send cards to the whole town—Mr Oakly's route! All the world will come—and I'll go among the world, too—I'll be mewed up no longer.

*Mrs Oak.* Provoking insolence! This is not to be endured—Look'e, Mr Oakly——

*Oak.* And look'e, Mrs Oakly, I will have my own way.

*Mrs Oak.* Nay, then, let me tell you, sir——

*Oak.* And let me tell you, madam, I will not be crossed——I wont be made a fool.

*Mrs Oak.* Why, you wont let me speak!

*Oak.* Because you don't speak as you ought. Madam, madam! you shan't look, nor walk, nor talk, nor think, but as I please.

*Mrs Oak.* Was there ever such a monster! I can bear this no longer. [*Bursts into tears.*] O you vile man! I can see through your design—you cruel, barbarous, inhuman——such usage to your poor wife!——you'll be the death of her.

*Oak.* She shan't be the death of me, I am determined.

*Mrs Oak.* That it should ever come to this!—To be contradicted—[*Sobbing.*]—insulted—abused—hated——'tis too much—my heart will burst with—oh—oh!——[*Falls into a fit.* HARRIOT, CHARLES, *&c. run to her assistance,*]

*Oak.* [*Interposing.*] Let her alone.

*Har.* Sir, Mrs Oakly———

*Cha.* For Heaven's sake, sir, she will be——

*Oak.* Let her alone, I say; I won't have her touched—let her alone—if her passions throw her into fits, let the strength of them carry her through them.

*Har.* Pray, my dear sir, let us assist her. She may——

*Oak.* I don't care—you shan't touch her—let her bear them patiently—she'll learn to behave better another time——Let her alone, I say.

*Mrs Oak.* [*Rising.*] O you monster!—you villain!—you base man!——Would you let me die for want of help?—would you——

*Oak.* Bless me! madam, your fit is very violent—take care of yourself.

*Mrs Oak.* Despised, ridiculed—but I'll be revenged—you shall see, sir——

*Oak.* Tol-de-rol loll-de-rol loll-de-rol loll! [*Singing.*

*Mrs Oak.* What, am I made a jest of? Exposed to all the world?—If there's law or justice——

*Oak.* Tol-de-rol loll-de-rol loll-de-rol loll! [*Singing.*

*Mrs Oak.* I shall burst with anger—Have a care, sir, you may repent this—Scorned and made ridiculous!—No power on earth shall hinder my revenge! [*Going.*

*Har.* [*Interposing.*] Stay, madam.

*Mrs Oak.* Let me go. I cannot bear this place.

*Har.* Let me beseech you, madam.

*Oak.* What does the girl mean? [*Apart.*

*Maj.* Courage, brother! you have done wonders. [*Apart.*

*Oak.* I think she'll have no more fits. [*Apart.*

*Har.* Stay, madam—Pray stay but one moment. I have been a painful witness of your uneasiness, and in great part the innocent occasion of it. Give me leave then——

*Mrs Oak.* I did not expect, indeed, to have found you here again. But, however———

*Har.* I see the agitation of your mind, and it makes me miserable. Suffer me to tell you the real truth. I can explain every thing to your satisfaction.

*Mrs Oak.* May be so—I cannot argue with you.

*Cha.* Pray, madam, hear her——for my sake ——for your own—dear madam!

*Mrs Oak.* Well———well——proceed.

*Oak.* I shall relapse. I can't bear to see her so uneasy. [*Apart.*

*Maj.* Hush———Hush! [*Apart.*

*Har.* I understand, madam, that your first alarm was occasioned by a letter from my father to your nephew.

*Rus.* I was in a bloody passion to be sure, madam!—The letter was not over civil, I believe—I did not know but the young rogue had ruined my girl—But its all over now, and so———

*Mrs Oak.* You was here yesterday, sir?

*Rus.* Yes, I came after Harriot. I thought I should find my young madam with my young sir, here.

*Mrs Oak.* With Charles, did you say, sir?

*Rus.* Ay, with Charles, madam! The young rogue has been fond of her a long time, and she of him, it seems.

*Mrs Oak.* I fear I have been to blame. [*Aside.*

*Rus.* I ask pardon, madam, for the disturbance I made in your house.

*Har.* And the abrupt manner in which I came into it, demands a thousand apologies. But the occasion must be my excuse.

*Mrs Oak.* How have I been mistaken! [*Aside.*—But did not I overhear you and Mr Oakly—— [*To* HARRIOT.

*Har.* Dear madam! you had but a partial hearing of our conversation. It related entirely to this gentleman.

*Cha.* To put it beyond doubt, madam, Mr Russet and my guardian have consented to our marriage; and we are in hopes that you will not withhold your approbation.

*Mrs Oak.* I have no further doubt—I see you are innocent, and it was cruel to suspect you—You have taken a load of anguish off my mind—and yet your kind interposition comes too late. Mr Oakly's love for me is entirely destroyed. [*Weeping.*

*Oak.* I must go to her—— [*Apart.*

*Maj.* Not yet!——Not yet! [*Apart.*

*Har.* Do not disturb yourself with such apprehensions. I am sure Mr Oakly loves you most affectionately.

*Oak.* I can hold no longer. [*Going to her.*] My affection for you, madam, is as warm as ever. Nothing can ever extinguish it. My constrained behaviour cut me to the soul—For, within these few hours, it has been all constrained——and it was with the utmost difficulty that I was able to support it.

*Mrs Oak.* O, Mr Oakly, how have I exposed myself! What low arts has my jealousy induced

to practise! I see my folly, and fear that you can never forgive me.

*Oak.* Forgive you!——You are too good, my love!—Forgive you!—Can you forgive me?—This change transports me — Brother! Mr Russet! Charles! Harriot! give me joy!—I am the happiest man in the world.

*Maj.* Joy, much joy to you both! though, by the by, you are not a little obliged to me for it. Did not I tell you I would cure all the disorders in your family? I beg pardon, sister, for taking the liberty to prescribe for you. My medicines have been somewhat rough, I believe, but they have had an admirable effect, and so don't be angry with your physician.

*Mrs Oak.* I am indeed obliged to you, and I feel—

*Oak.* Nay, my dear, no more of this. All that's past must be utterly forgotten.

*Mrs Oak.* I have not merited this kindness, but it shall, hereafter, be my study to deserve it. Away with all idle jealousies! And since my suspicions have hitherto been groundless, I am resolved for the future never to suspect at all.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

# THE

# SCHOOL FOR LOVERS.

BY

*WHITEHEAD.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### MEN.

SIR JOHN DORILANT, *a man of nice honour, guardian to* CÆLIA.
MODELY, } *men of the town.*
BELMOUR, }
*An old Steward to* SIR JOHN DORILANT.
*Footman to* SIR JOHN DORILANT.

### WOMEN.

LADY BEVERLEY, *a widow lady, mother to* CÆLIA.
CÆLIA, *daughter to* LADY BEVERLEY, *and ward to* SIR JOHN.
ARAMINTA, *sister to* SIR JOHN DORILANT.

*Scene—A garden belonging to* SIR JOHN DORILANT'S *house in the country, with an arbour, garden-chairs, &c.*

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—*A garden.*

*Enter* ARAMINTA *with an affected carelessness, and knotting;* MODELY *following.*

*Mode.* BUT, madam!

*Ara.* But, sir! what can possibly have alarmed you thus? You see me quite unconcerned. I only tell you in a plain, simple, narrative manner—(this plaguy thread)—and merely by way of conversation, that you are in love with Cælia; and where is the mighty harm in all this?

*Mode.* The harm in it, madam! have I not told you a thousand and a thousand times, that you were the only woman who could possibly make me happy?

*Ara.* Why, aye, to be sure you have, and sworn a thousand and a thousand oaths to confirm that assertion.

*Mode.* And am not I here now, expressly to marry you?

*Ara.* Why, that, too, is true—but—you are in love with Cælia.

*Mode.* Bless me, madam, what can I say to you? If it had not been for my attendance upon you, I had never known Cælia, or her mother either—though they are both my relations. The mother has since indeed put some kind of confidence in me—she is a widow, you know—

*Ara.* And wants consolation! The poor orphan, too, her daughter!—Well, charity is an excellent virtue. I never considered it in that light before. You are vastly charitable, Mr Modely.

*Mode.* It is impossible to talk with you.—If you will not do me justice, do it to yourself, at least. Is there any comparison betwixt you and

Cælia? Could any man of sense hesitate a moment? She has yet no character. One does not know what she is, or what she will be; a chit—a green girl of fourteen or fifteen.

*Ara.* Seventeen, at least.———(I cannot undo this knot.)———

*Mode.* Well, let her be seventeen. Would any man of judgment attach himself to a girl of that age? On my soul, if one was to make love to her, she would hardly understand what one meant.

*Ara.* Girls are not quite so ignorant as you may imagine, Mr Modely; Cælia will understand you, take my word for it, and does understand you. As to your men of judgment and sense, here is my brother, now;—I take him to be full as reasonable as yourself, and somewhat older; and yet, with all his philosophy, he has brought himself to a determination at last, to fulfil the father's will, and marry this green girl. I am sorry to tell you so, Mr Modely, but he will certainly marry her.

*Mode.* Let him marry her. I should perhaps do it myself, if I was in his place. He was an intimate friend of her father's. She is a great fortune, and was given to him by will. But do you imagine, my dear Araminta, that if he was left to his own choice, without any bias, he would not rather have a woman nearer his own years? He might almost be her father.

*Ara.* That is true. But you will find it difficult to persuade me, that youth in a woman is so insurmountable an objection. I fancy, Mr Modely, it may be got over. Suppose I leave you to think of it.—(I cannot get this right.) [*Going.*

*Mode.* Stay, dear Araminta! why will you plague me thus? Your own charms, my earnestness, might prove to you—

*Ara.* I tell you I don't want proofs.

*Mode.* Well, well, you shall have none, then. But give me leave to hope, since you have done me the honour to be a little uneasy on my account—

*Ara.* Uneasy!—I uneasy! What does the man mean?—I was a little concerned, indeed, to give you uneasiness by informing you of my brother's intended marriage with Cælia. But—this shuttle bends so abominably.—[*Aside.*]

*Mode.* Thou perplexing tyrant! Nay, you shall not go. May I continue to adore you? you must not forbid me that.

*Ara.* For my part, I neither command nor forbid any thing. Only this I would have you remember, I have quick eyes. Your servant.—I wish this knotting had never come in fashion. [*Aside.*] [*Exit* ARA.

*Mode.* Quick eyes, indeed! I thought my cunning here had been a master-piece. The girl cannot have told, sure! and the mother is entirely on my side. They certainly were those inquisitive eyes she speaks of, which have found out this secret. Well, I must be more cautious for the future, and act the lover to Araminta ten times stronger than ever. One would not give her up till one was sure of succeeding in the other place.

*Enter* BELMOUR *from behind, with a book in his hand.*

*Bel.* Ha, ha, ha! Well said, Modely!

*Mod.* [*Starting.*] Belmour!—how the deuce came you here?

*Bel.* How came I here!—How came you here, if you come to that? A man can't retire from the noise and bustle of the world, to admire the beauties of the spring, and read pastoral in an arbour, but impertinent lovers must disturb his meditations. Thou art the arrantest hypocrite, Modely— [*Throwing away the book.*

*Mod.* Hypocrite!—My dear friend, we men of gallantry must be so. But have a care! we may have other listeners for aught I know, who may not be so proper for confidants. [*Looking about.*

*Bel.* You may be easy on that head. We have the garden to ourselves. The widow and her daughter are just gone in, and sir John is busy with his steward.

*Mod.* The widow, and her daughter! Why, were they in the garden?

*Bel.* They just came into it; but upon seeing you and Araminta together, they turned back again.

*Mode.* On seeing me and Araminta! I hope I have no jealousies there, too. However, I am glad Cælia knows I am in the garden, because it may probably induce her to fall in my way—by chance, you know, and give me an opportunity of talking to her.

*Bel.* Do you think she likes you?

*Mode.* She does not know what she does.

*Bel.* Do you like her?

*Mode.* Why, faith, I think I do.

*Bel.* Why, then, do you pursue your affair with Araminta; and not find some honourable means of breaking off with her?

*Mode.* That might not be quite so expedient. I think Araminta the finest woman, and Cælia the prettiest girl, I know. Now, they are both good fortunes, and one of them I am resolved to have, but which—

*Bel.* Your great wisdom has not yet determined. Thou art undoubtedly the vainest fellow living. I thought you brought me down here now to your wedding?

*Mode.* 'Egad, I thought so, too; but this plaguy little rustic has disconcerted all my schemes. Sir John, you know, by her father's will, may marry her if he pleases, and she forfeits her estate if she marries any one else. Now, I am contriving to bring it about, that I may get her, and her fortune, too.

*Bel.* A very likely business, truly. So you modestly expect that sir John Dorilant should give up his mistress, and then throw her fortune

into the bargain, as an additional reward to the obliging man who has seduced her from him?

*Mode.* Hum! why, I don't expect quite that. But, you know, Belmour, he is a man of honour, and would not force her inclinations, though he loved her to distraction.——Come, come, he is quite a different creature from what you and I are.

*Bel.* Speak for yourself, good sir; yet, why should you imagine that her inclinations are not as likely to fix upon him as you? He has a good person, and is scarce older than yourself.

*Mode.* That shews your ignorance; I am ten years younger than he is. My dress, and the company I keep, give a youth and vivacity to me, which he must always want. An't I a man of the town? O that town, Belmour! Could I but have met these ladies there, I had done the business.

*Bel.* Were they never there?

*Mode.* Never.—Sir Harry Beverley, the father of this girl, lived always in the country, and divided his time between his books and his hounds. His wife and daughter seldom mixed with people of their own rank, but at a horse-race, or a rural visit. And see the effects! The girl, though she is naturally genteel, has an air of simplicity.

*Bel.* But does not want sense.

*Mode.* No, no! She has a devilish deal of that kind of sense, which is acquired by early reading. I have heard her talk occasionally, like a queen in a tragedy; or, at least, like a sentimental lady in a comedy, much above your misses of thirty in town, I assure you. As to the mother—but she is a character, and explains herself.

*Bel.* Yes, yes; I have read her. But pray, how came it to pass, that the father, who was of a different way of thinking in regard to party, should have left sir John guardian to his daughter, with the additional clause, too, of her being obliged to marry him?

*Mode.* Why, that is somewhat surprising. But the truth of the case was, they were thoroughly acquainted, and each considered party as the foible of the other. Sir Harry thought a good husband his daughter's best security for happiness; and he knew it was impossible sir John Dorilant should prove a bad one.

*Bel.* And yet this prospect of happiness would you destroy?

*Mode.* No, no; I only see farther than sir Harry did, and would increase that happiness, by giving her a better husband.

*Bel.* Oh! your humble servant, sir.

*Mode.* Besides, the mother is entirely in my interest, and, by the by, has a hankering after sir John herself. He is a sober man, and should have a woman of discretion for his wife; not a hoydening girl. 'Egad, Belmour, suppose you attacked the widow? the woman is young enough, and has an excellent jointure.

*Bel.* And so become your father-in-law?

*Mode.* You will have an admirable opportunity to-night: we are to have the fiddles, you know, and you may dance with her.

When music softens, and when dancing fires!

Eh! Bellmour?

*Bel.* You are vastly kind to sir John, and would ease him, I find, of both his mistresses.—But, suppose this man of honour should be fool enough to resign his mistress, may not another kind of honour oblige him to run you through the body for deserting his sister?

*Mode.* Why, faith, it may. However, it is not the first duel I have fought on such an occasion; so I am his man. Not that it is impossible but he may have scruples there, too.

*Bel.* You don't think him a coward?

*Mode.* I know he is not. But your reasoning men have strange distinctions. They are quite different creatures, as I told you, from you and me.

*Bel.* You are pleased to compliment. But, suppose now, as irrational as you think me, I should find out a means to make this whole affair easy to you?

*Mode.* How do you mean?

*Bel.* Not by attacking the widow, but by making my addresses, in good earnest, to Araminta.

*Mode.* I forbid that absolutely.

*Bel.* What, do you think it possible I should succeed after the accomplished Mr Modely?

*Mode.* Why, faith, between you and me, I think not; but I don't chuse to hazard it.

*Bel.* Then you love her still?

*Mode.* I confess it.

*Bel.* And it is nothing upon earth but that insatiable vanity of yours, with a little tincture of avarice, that leads you a gadding thus?

*Mode.* I plead guilty. But, be it as it will, I am determined to pursue my point. And see, where the little rogue comes most opportunely. I told you she would be here. Go, go, Belmour—you must not listen to all my love scenes.—[*Exit* BEL.]—Now for a serious face, a little upon the tragic; young girls are mighty fond of despairing lovers.

*Enter* CÆLIA.

*Celia.* [*With an affected surprise.*]—Mr Modely!—Are you here?—I am come to meet my mamma—I did not think to meet you here.

*Mode.* Are you sorry to find me here, madam?

*Celia.* Why should I be sorry, Mr Modely?

*Mode.* May I hope you are pleased with it?

*Celia.* I have no dislike to company.

*Mode.* But is all company alike? Surely one would choose one's companions. Would it have been the same thing to you, if you had met sir John Dorilant here?

*Celia.* I should be very ungrateful, if I did not

like sir John Dorilant's company. I am sure I have all the obligations in the world to him, and so had my poor papa. [*Sighing.*

*Mode.* Whatever were your papa's obligations, his gratitude, I am sure, was unbounded. O that I had been his friend!

*Celia.* Why should you wish that, Mr Modely? You would have had a great loss in him.

*Mode.* I believe I should. But I might likewise have had a consolation for that loss, which would have contained in it all earthly happiness.

*Celia.* I don't understand you.

*Mode.* He might have left his Celia to me.

*Celia.* Dear, how you talk!

*Mode.* Talk, madam! Oh, I could talk for ever, would you but listen to my heart's soft language, nor cruelly affect to disbelieve when I declare I love you.

*Celia.* Love me, Mr Modely? Are you not in love with Araminta?

*Mode.* I once thought I was.

*Celia.* And do lovers ever change?

*Mode.* Not those who feel a real passion.—But there are false alarms in love, which the unpractised heart sometimes mistakes for true ones.

*Celia.* And were yours such for Araminta?

*Mode.* Alas! I feel they were.

[*Looking earnestly at her.*

*Celia.* You don't intend to marry her then, I hope?

*Mode.* Do you hope I should not marry her?

*Celia.* To be sure I do. I would not have the poor lady deceived, and I would willingly have a better opinion of Mr Modely, than to believe him capable of making false protestations.

*Mode.* To you he never could.

*Celia.* To me?—I am out of the question.—But I am sorry for Araminta, for I believe she loves you.

*Mode.* If you can pity those who love in vain, why am not I an object of compassion?

*Celia.* Dear Mr Modely, why will you talk thus? My hand, you know, is destined to sir John Dorilant, and my duty there does not even permit me to think of other lovers.

*Mode.* Happy, happy man! Yet give me leave to ask one question, madam. I dread to do it, though my last glimpse of happiness depends upon your answer.

*Celia.* What question? Nay, pray speak, I entreat it of you.

*Mode.* Then tell me, lovely Celia, sincerely tell me, were your choice left free, and did it depend upon you only, to determine who should be the master of your affections, might I expect one favourable thought?

*Celia.* [*After some hesitation.*]—It—it does not depend upon me.

*Mode.* I know it does not, but if it did?

*Celia.* Come, come, Mr Modely, I cannot talk upon this subject. Impossibilities are impossibilities. But I hope you will acquaint Araminta instantly with this change in your inclinations.

*Mode.* I would do it, but dare not.

*Celia.* You should break it first to sir John.

*Mode.* My difficulty does not lie in the breaking it; but, if I confess my passion at an end, I must no longer expect admittance into this family, and I could still wish to talk to Celia as a friend.

*Celia.* Indeed, Mr Modely, I should be loth myself to lose your acquaintance; but—O here comes my mamma! she may put you in a method.

*Enter* LADY BEVERLEY.

*Lady Bev.* In any method, my dear, which decency and reserve will permit. Your servant, cousin Modely. What, you are talking strangely to this girl now?—O you men!

*Mode.* Your ladyship knows the sincerity of my passion here.

*Celia.* [*With surprise.*]—Knows your sincerity?

*Lady Bev.* Well, well; what signifies what I know? You were mentioning some method I was to put you in.

*Celia.* Mr Modely, madam, has been confessing to me that he no longer loves Araminta.

*Lady Bev.* Hum!—Why, such things may happen, child. We are not all able to govern our affections. But I hope if he breaks off with her, he will do it with decency.

*Mode.* That, madam, is the difficulty.

*Lady Bev.* What! Is it a difficulty to be decent? Fie, fie, Mr Modely.

*Mode.* Far be it from me even to think so, madam, before a person of your ladyship's reserved behaviour. But, considering how far I have gone in the affair——

*Lady Bel.* Well, well, if that be all, I may, perhaps, help you out, and break it to sir John myself—Not that I approve of roving affections, I assure you.

*Mode.* You bind me ever to you. But there is another cause, which you alone can promote, and on which my eternal happiness——

*Lady Bev.* Leave us—leave us, cousin Modely. I must not hear you talk in this extravagant manner.—[*Pushing him towards the scene, and then aside to him.*]—I shall bring it about better in your absence. Go, go, man; go.—[*Exit* MODELY.]—A pretty kind of fellow, really. Now, Celia: come nearer, child; I have something of importance to say to you. What do you think of that gentleman?

*Celia.* Of Mr Modely, madam?

*Lady Bev.* Ay, Mr Modely, my cousin Modely:

*Celia.* Think of him, madam?

*Lady Bev.* Ay, think of him, child; you are old enough to think, sure, after the education I have given you. Well, what answer do you make?

*Celia.* I really don't understand your ladyship's question.

*Lady Bev.* Not understand me, child? Why, I ask you how you like Mr Modely? What you should think of him as a husband?

*Celia.* Mr Modely as a husband! Why, surely, madam, sir John———

*Lady Bev.* Fiddlefaddle, sir John! sir John knows better things than to plague himself with a wife in leading-strings.

*Celia.* Is your ladyship sure of that?

*Lady Bev.* O ho! Would you be glad to have me sure of it?

*Celia.* I don't know what I should be glad of. I would not give sir John a moment's pain to be mistress of the whole world.

*Lady Bev.* But if it should be brought about without giving him pain. Hey! Celia——

[*Patting her cheek with her fan.*

*Celia.* I should be sorry for it.

*Lady Bev.* Hey day!

*Celia.* For then he must think lightly of me.

*Lady Bev.* What does the girl mean? Come, come, I must enter roundly into this affair. Here, here, sit down, and tell me plainly and honestly, without equivocation or reservation, is Modely indifferent to you? Nay, nay—look me in the face; turn your eyes towards me. One judges greatly by the eyes, especially in women. Your poor papa used to say that my eyes reasoned better than my tongue. Well, and now tell me, without blushing, is Modely indifferent to you?

*Celia.* I fear he is not, madam, and it is that which perplexes me.

*Lady Bev.* How do you feel when you meet him?

*Celia.* Fluttered.

*Lady Bev.* Hum! While you are with him?

*Celia.* Fluttered.

*Lady Bev.* Hum! When you leave him?

*Celia.* Fluttered still.

*Lady Bev.* Strong symptoms truly!

*Celia.* When sir John Dorilant talks to me, my heart is softened, but not perplexed. My esteem, my gratitude overflows towards him. I consider him as a kind father, with all the tenderness, without the authority.

*Lady Bev.* But when Mr Modely talks?

*Celia.* My tranquillity of mind is gone; I am pleased with hearing what I doubt is flattery, and when he grasps my hand———

*Lady Bev.* Well, well, I know all that. Be decent, child. You need say no more. Mr Modely is the man. [*Rising.*

*Celia.* But, dear madam, there are a thousand obstacles. I am afraid sir John loves me; I am sure he esteems me, and I would not forfeit his esteem for the universe. I am certain I can make him an affectionate and an humble wife, and I think I can forget Mr Modely.

*Lady Bev.* Forget a fiddle! Don't talk to me of forgetting. I order you, on your duty, not to forget. Mr Modely is, and shall be, the man.—You may trust my prudence for bringing it about. I will talk with sir John instantly. I know what you are going to say, but I will not hear a word of it. Can you imagine, Celia, that I shall do any thing but with the utmost decency and decorum?

*Celia.* I know you will not, madam; but there are delicacies———

*Lady Bev.* With which I am unacquainted to be sure, and my daughter must instruct me in them! Pray, Celia, where did you learn this nicety of sentiments? Who was it that inspired them?

*Celia.* But the maxims of the world———

*Lady Bev.* Are altered, I suppose, since I was of your age. Poor thing, what world hast thou seen? Notwithstanding your delicacies and your maxims, sir John, perhaps, may be wiser than you imagine, and choose a wife of somewhat more experience.

*Celia.* May he be happy wherever he chooses—But, dear madam———

*Lady Bev.* Again? don't make me angry. I will positively not be instructed. Ay, you may well blush. Nay, no tears. Come, come, Celia, I forgive you. I had idle delicacies myself once. Lard! I remember when your poor papa—he, he, he—but we have no time for old stories.—What would you say now, if sir John himself should propose it, and persuade the match, and yet continue as much your friend as ever, nay, become more so, a nearer friend?

*Celia.* In such a case, madam———

*Lady Bev.* I understand you, and will about it instantly. B'ye, Celia; O how its little heart flutters! [*Exit.*

*Celia.* It does, indeed. A nearer friend? I hardly know whether I should wish her success or not—Sir John is so affectionate. Would I had never seen Mr Modely!———Araminta, too! what will she say? O, I see a thousand bad consequences. I must follow her, and prevent them. [*Exit.*

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.—*Continues.*

*Enter* LADY BEVERLEY *and* MODELY.

*Lady Bev.* PRITHEE, don't tease me so; I vow, cousin Modely, you are almost as peremptory as my daughter. She, truly, was teaching me decorum just now, and plaguing me with her delicacies, and her stuff. I tell you, sir John will be in the garden immediately; this is always his hour of walking; and when he comes, I shall lay the whole affair before him, with all its concatenation of circumstances, and, I warrant you, bring it about.

*Mode.* I have no doubt, madam, of the transcendency of your ladyship's rhetoric; it is on that I entirely rely. But I must beg leave to hint, that Araminta already suspects my passion, and should it be openly declared, would undoubtedly prevail, that instant, with her brother to forbid me the house.

*Lady Bev.* Why, that might be———

*Mode.* And though I told your daughter I did not care how soon it came to an eclaircissement; yet a woman of your ladyship's penetration and knowledge of the world, must see the necessity of concealing it, at least for a time. I beg pardon for offering what may have even the distant appearance of instruction. But it is sir John's delicacy which must be principally alarmed with apprehensions of her disregard for him; and I am sure your ladyship's manner of doing it, will shew him where he might much better place his affections, and with an undoubted prospect of happiness.

*Lady Bev.* Ay, now you talk to the purpose—But stay, is not that sir John coming this way? It is, I vow, and Araminta with him. We'll turn down this walk, and reason the affair a little more, and then I will come round the garden upon him.

[MODELY *takes her hand to lead her out.*
You are very gallant, cousin Modely. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter* SIR JOHN DORILANT *and* ARAMINTA.

*Ara.* What do you drag me into the garden for? We were private enough where we were—and I hate walking.

*Sir John.* Forgive me, my dear sister: I am restless every where; my head and heart are full of nothing but this lovely girl.

*Ara.* My dear, dear brother, you are enough to spoil any woman in the universe. I tell you, again and again, the girl is a good girl, an excellent girl, and will make an admirable wife. You may trust one woman in her commendations of another; we are not apt to be too favourable in our judgments, especially when there is beauty in the case.

*Sir John.* You charm me, when you talk thus. If she is really all this, how happy must the man be, who can engage her affections! But, alas! Araminta, in every thing which regards me, it is duty, not love, which actuates her behaviour.—She steals away my very soul by her attentions; but never once expresses that heart-felt tenderness, those sympathetic feelings———

*Ara.* Ha, ha, ha! O my stars! Sympathetic feelings! Why, would you have a girl of her age have those sympathetic feelings, as you call them? If she had, take my word for it, she would coquette it with half the fellows in town, before she had been married a twelvemonth.—Besides, sir John, you don't consider that you was her father's friend; she has been accustomed, from her infancy, to respect you in that light; and our father's friends, you know, are always old people, greybeards, philosophers, enemies to youth, and the destruction of gaiety.

*Sir John.* But I was never such.

*Ara.* You may imagine so; but you always had a grave turn. I hated you once myself.

*Sir John.* Dear Araminta!

*Ara.* I did, as I hope to live; for many a time has your aversion to dancing hindered me from having a fiddle. By the by, remember we are to have the fiddles to-night. But let that pass. As the case now stands, if I was not already so near akin to you, you have the temper in the world which I should choose in a husband.

*Sir John.* That is obliging, however.

*Ara.* Not so very obliging, perhaps, neither. It would be merely for my own sake; for, then, would I have the appearance of the most obedient, sympathetic wife in the universe, and yet be as despotic in my government as an eastern monarch. And when I grew tired, as I probably should do, of a want of contradiction, why, I should find an easy remedy for that, too; I could break your heart in about a month.

*Sir John.* Don't trifle with me; 'tis your serious advice I want; give it me honestly as a friend, and tenderly as a sister.

*Ara.* Why, I have done it fifty times. What can I say more? If you will have it again, you must. This, then, it is, in plain terms. But you are sure you are heartily in love with her?

*Sir John.* Pshaw!

*Ara.* Well, then, that we will take for granted; and now you want to know what is right and proper for you to do in the case. Why, was I in your place, I should make but short work with it. She knows the circumstances of her father's will; therefore, would I go immediately to her, tell her how my heart stood inclined, and hope she had no objections to comply, with what it is not in her power to refuse.

*Sir John.* You would not have me talk thus abruptly to her?

*Ara.* Indeed I would. It will save a world of trouble. She will blush, perhaps, at first, and look a little awkward (and, by the by, so will you, too); but if she is the girl I take her for, after a little irresolute gesture, and about five minutes conversation, she will drop you a curtesy with the demure humility of a vestal, and tell you it shall be as you and her mamma please.

*Sir John.* O, that it were come to that!

*Ara.* And, pray, what hinders it? Nothing upon earth but your consummate prudence and discretion.

*Sir John.* I cannot think of marrying her, till I am sure she loves me.

*Ara.* Lud, lud!—Why, what does that signify? If she consents, is not that enough?

*Sir John.* Her gratitude may induce her to consent, rather than make me unhappy.

*Ara.* You would absolutely make a woman mad.

*Sir John.* Why, could you think of marrying a man who has no regard for you?

*Ara.* The case is widely different, my good casuistical brother; and perhaps I could not—unless I was very much in love with him.

*Sir John.* And could you then?

*Ara.* Yes, I could—to tell you the truth, I believe I shall.

*Sir John.* What do you mean?

*Ara.* I shall not tell you. You have business enough of your own upon your hands.

*Sir John.* Have you any doubts of Modely?

*Ara.* I shall keep them to myself, if I have. For you are a wretched counsellor in a love-case.

*Sir John.* But dear Araminta———

*Ara.* But dear sir John Dorilant, you may make yourself perfectly easy, for you shall positively know nothing of my affairs. As to your own, if you do not instantly resolve to speak to Celia, I will go and talk to her myself.

*Sir John.* Stay, lady Beverley is coming towards us.

*Ara.* And has left my swain yonder by himself.

*Sir John.* Suppose I break it to her?

*Ara.* It is not a method which I should advise; but do as you please. I know that horrid woman's sentiments very exactly, and I shall be glad to have her teased a little. [*Aside.*]——I'll give you an opportunity by leaving you; and so adieu, my dear sentimental brother!

*Enter* LADY BEVERLEY *and* MODELY.

We'll change partners, if you please, madam.—[*To* LADY BEVERLEY *as she enters. And then exit with* MODELY.]

*Lady Bev.* Poor mistaken creature! how fond the thing is! [*Aside, and looking after* ARAMINTA.] Your servant, sir John.

*Sir John.* Your ladyship's most obedient.——[*After some irresolute gesture on both sides*——LADY BEVERLEY *speaks.*]

*Lady Bev.* I—I—have wanted an opportunity of speaking to you, sir John, a great while.

*Sir John.* And I, madam, have long had an affair of consequence to propose to your ladyship.

*Lady Bev.* An affair of consequence to me!—O lud!———will you please to speak, sir.

*Sir John.* Not till I have heard your ladyship's commands.

*Lady Bev.* What, must women speak first! Fie, sir John——[*Looking languishingly.*]——Well, then, the matter, in short, is this: I have long been thinking how to dispose of my girl properly. She is grown a woman, you see, and, though I, who am her mother, say it, has her allurements.

*Sir John.* Uncommon ones indeed.

*Lady Bev.* Now, I would willingly consult with you how to get her well married, before she is tainted with the indecorums of the world.

*Sir John.* It was the very subject which I proposed to speak to you upon. I am sorry to put your ladyship in mind of a near and dear loss—But you remember sir Harry's will.

*Lady Bev.* Yes, yes, I remember it very well. Poor man! it was undoubtedly the only weak thing he was ever guilty of.

*Sir John.* Madam!

*Lady Bev.* I say, sir John, we must pardon the failings of our deceased friends. Indeed his affection for his child excuses it.

*Sir John.* Excuses it!

*Lady Bev.* Yes, indeed, does it. His fondness for her might naturally make him wish to place her with a person of your known excellence of character; for my own part, had I died, I should have wished it myself. I don't believe you have your equal in the world. Nay, dear sir John, 'tis no compliment. This, I say, might make him not attend to the impropriety of the thing, and the reluctance a gentleman of your good sense and judgment must undoubtedly have to accede to so unsuitable a treaty; especially as he could not but know there were women of discretion in the world, who would be proud of an alliance where the prospect of felicity was so inviting and unquestionable.

*Sir John.* [*Who had appeared uneasy all the time she was speaking.*] What women, madam? I know of none.

*Lady Bev.* Sir John! That is not quite so complaisant, methinks—to our sex, I mean.

*Sir John.* I beg your pardon, madam; I hardly know what I say. Your ladyship has disconcerted every thing I was going to propose to you.

*Lady Bev.* Bless me, sir John!—I disconcerted every thing! How, pray? I have been only talking to you in an open friendly manner, with regard to my daughter; our daughter, indeed, I might call her, for you have been a father to her. The girl herself always speaks of you as such.

*Sir John.* Speaks of me as a father?

*Lady Bev.* Why, more unlikely things have happened, sir John.

*Sir John.* Than what, madam?

*Lady Bev.* Dear sir John! You put such peremptory questions; you might easily understand what one meant, methinks.

*Sir John.* I find, madam, I must speak plain at once. Know, then, my heart, my soul, my every thought of happiness, is fixed upon that lovely girl.

*Lady Bev.* O, astonishing! Well, miracles are not ceased, that's certain. But every body, they say, must do a foolish thing once in their lives. And can you really and sincerely think of putting sir Harry's will in execution?

*Sir John.* Would I could!

*Lady Bev.* To be sure the girl has a fine fortune.

*Sir John.* Fortune! I despise it. I would give it with all my soul to any one who could engage me her affections. Fortune! dirt.

*Lady Bev.* I am thunderstruck!

*Sir John.* [*Turning eagerly to her.*] O, madam, tell me, sincerely tell me, what method can I possibly pursue to make her think favourably of me! You know her inmost soul, you know the tender moments of address, the easy avenues to her unpractised heart. Be kind, and point them out. [*Grasping her hand.*

*Lady Bev.* I vow, sir John, I don't know what to say to you. Let go my hand. You talked of my disconcerting you just now; I am sure you disconcert me with a witness.———[*Aside.*] I did not think the man had so much rapture in him. He squeezed my hand with such an emphasis, I may gain him, perhaps, at last.

*Sir John.* Why will you not speak, madam? Can you see me on the brink of desperation, and not lend a friendly hand to my assistance?

*Lady Bev.* I have it. [*Aside.*]———Alas, sir John, what signifies what I can do? Can I answer for the inclinations of a giddy girl?

*Sir John.* You know she is not such; her innocent mind is yet untainted with the follies of her sex. And if a life devoted to her service, without a wish but what regards her happiness, can win her to be mine———

*Lady Bev.* Why, that might go a great way with an unprejudiced mind. But when a first passion has taken place———

*Sir John.* [*With amazement.*] What do you mean?

*Lady Bev.* To tell you the truth, I am afraid the girl is not so untainted as you imagine.

*Sir John.* You distract me.——How—when—whom can she have seen?

*Lady Bev.* Undoubtedly there is a man—

*Sir John.* Tell me who, that I may——no, that I may give her to him, and make her happy, whatever becomes of me.

*Lady Bev.* That is generous indeed——So—so. [*Aside.*

*Sir John.* But 'tis impossible. I have observed all her motions, all her attentions, with a lover's eye, incapable of erring. Yet stay——has any body written to her?

*Lady Bev.* There is no occasion for letters, when people are in the same house together.

*Sir John.* Confusion!

*Lady Bev.* I was going to offer some proposals to you, but your strange declaration stopped me short.

*Sir John.* You proposals?—You?—Are you her abettor in the affair? O madam, what unpardonable crime have I committed against you, that you should thus conspire my ruin? Have not I always behaved to you like a friend, a brother?—I will not call you ungrateful.

*Lady Bev.* Mercy on us!—The man raves—How could it possibly enter into my head, or the girl's either, that you had any serious thoughts of marrying her? But I see you are too much discomposed at present, to admit of calm reasoning. So I shall take some other opportunity.——Friend—brother—ungrateful!—Very fine truly!—I hope, at least, you will not think of forcing the poor girl's inclinations! Ungrateful indeed! [*Exit in a passion.*

*Sir John.* Not for the universe—Stay, madam! She is gone. But it is no matter. I am but little disposed for altercation now. Heigh ho!—Good Heaven! can so slight an intercourse have effected all this? I have scarce ever seen them together. O that I had been born with Belmour's happy talents of address!—Address!——'tis absolute magic, 'tis fascination—Alas! 'tis the rapidity of real passion. Why did Modely bring him hither to his wedding? Every thing has conspired against me. He brought him; and the delay of the lawyers has kept him here. Had I taken Araminta's advice a poor fortnight ago, it had not been in the power of fate to have undone me. And yet she might have seen him afterwards, which would at least have made her duty uneasy to her. Heigh ho!

*Enter* ARAMINTA *and* MODELY.

*Ara.* [*Entering.*] I tell you, I heard them very loud! and I will see what is the matter. O! here is my brother alone.

*Sir John.* [*Taking her tenderly by the hand.*] O Araminta! I am lost beyond redemption!

*Ara.* Dear brother, what can have happened to you?

*Sir John.* [*Turning to* MODELY.] Mr Modely, you could not intend it, but you have ruined me.

*Mode.* [*Alarmed.*] I, sir John!

*Sir John.* You have brought a friend with you, who has pierced me to the very soul!

*Mode.* Belmour!

*Sir John.* He has stolen my Celia's affections from me.

*Ara.* [*Looking slyly at* MODELY.] Belmour!

*Mode.* This must be a mistake, but I'll humour

it. [*Aside.*] It cannot be—who can have told you?

*Sir John.* Her mother has been this instant with me to make proposals on the subject.

*Mode.* For Belmour!

*Sir John.* She did not absolutely mention his name, but I could not mistake it. For she told me the favoured lover was under the same roof with us.

*Mode.* [*A little disconcerted.*] I could not have believed it of him.

*Ara.* Nor do I yet.

[*Looking slyly again at* MODELY.

*Mode.* There must certainly be some mistake in it; at the worst, I am sure I can prevail so far with Belmour, as to make him drop his pretensions.

*Sir John.* You cannot make her cease to love him. [*Sighing.*]

*Mode.* Time may easily get the better of so young a passion.

*Sir John.* Never, never; she is too sincere, too delicately sensible.

*Mode.* Come, come, you must not think so; it is not yet gone so far, but that it may be totally forgotten.—Now for a master-stroke to clench the whole.—[*Aside.*] In the mean time, sir John, I have the satisfaction of acquainting you, that my affair, with Araminta's leave, draws very near a conclusion. The lawyers have finished their papers, and only now wait for your perusal of them.

*Ara.* [*Aside.*] Well said!

*Mode.* I ordered the writings to be laid upon your table.

*Ara.* [*Aside.*] What does he mean?

*Sir John.* Dear Mr Modely, you shall not wait a moment for me. I will dispatch them instantly. I feel the want of happiness too severely myself, to postpone it in others. I leave you with my sister; when she names the day, you may depend upon my concurrence.

[*Exit* SIR JOHN.

[MODE. *and* ARA. *look at one another for some time, then he speaks.*] I hope, madam, you are now convinced of my sincerity?

*Ara.* I am absolutely struck dumb with your assurance.

*Mod.* [*With an affected surprise.*] Madam!

*Ara.* You cannot mean all this.

*Mode.* Why not, madam?

*Ara.* Why, don't you know that I know——

*Mode.* I cannot help a lady's knowledge of imaginations. All I know is, that it is in your power to make me either the happiest, or most miserable man in the whole creation.

*Ara.* Well, this is astonishing.

*Mode.* I am sorry, madam, that any unguarded behaviour of mine, any little playful gallantries, should have occasioned surmises, which—

*Ara.* Serious, as I hope to live?

*Mode.* Is it not enough to make one serious, when the woman one has pursued for years, almost with adoration, is induced, by mere appearances, to doubt the honourableness of one's intentions? Have you not heard me this moment apply to your brother, even in the midst of his uneasiness?——I little expected where the difficulty would lie.

*Ara.* Well, well, poor thing, I won't tease it any longer; here, there, take my hand.

*Mode.* Duped, by Jupiter!—[*Aside.*] O my everlasting treasure! And when, and when shall I be happy?

*Ara.* It shall depend upon yourself.

*Mode.* To-morrow, then, my angel, be the day. O Araminta, I cannot speak my transport!———And did you really think I was in love with Celia?

*Ara.* Why, as a proof of my future sincerity, I must confess I did.

*Mode.* I wonder how you could!

*Ara.* Come, come, there were grounds enough for a woman in love to go upon.

*Mode.* [*Taking her by the hand.*] But you are now perfectly easy!

*Ara.* [*Pulling her hand from him.*] Why, yes, I think I am.———But what can my brother mean about Belmour?

*Mode.* It is some trick of the widow's.

*Ara.* I dare say she meant you.

*Mode.* Possibly she might——you know her motives.

*Ara.* Yes, yes; her passion for my brother is pretty notorious. But the wretch will be mistaken.———To-morrow, you say?

*Mode.* To-morrow, my adorable.

*Ara.* It shall be as you please.-------But my situation is so terribly awkward, that I must break from you. Adieu! [*Exit* ARA.

*Mode.* Upon my soul she is a fine woman, and loves me to distraction; and, what is still more, I most undoubtedly love her.-----I have a good mind to take her.-----Yet, not to have it in my power to succeed in the other place, would call my parts in question.-----No, no;---I must not disparage my parts neither.-----In order to be a great character, one should go as near being a rogue as possible. I have a philosopher's opinion on my side in that, and the practice of half the heroes and politicians in Europe.

[*Exit.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.—*Continues.*

*Enter* BELMOUR.

*Bel.* CELIA in love with me! 'Egad the thing is not impossible; my friend Modely may have been a little mistaken. Sir John was very serious when he told me of it; and though I protested to him that I had never made the least advances, he still persisted in his opinion.—The girl must have told him so herself——Let me recollect a little. She is always extremely civil to me—but that, indeed, she is to every body.—I do not remember any thing particular in her looks; but I shall watch them more narrowly the next time I see her.——She is very handsome; and yet, in my opinion, notwithstanding Modely's infidelity, Araminta is much the finer woman.—Suppose—No, that will not do.

*Enter* MODELY.

*Mode.* So, so, Mr Belmour, I imagined I should find you here; this is the lover's corner. We have all had our reveries in it. But why don't you talk louder, man? You ought, at least, to give me my revenge in that.—My soliloquies, you know, are easily overheard.

*Bel.* I never designedly over-heard them, Mr Modely; nor did I make any improper use of the accident.

*Mode.* Grave, very grave, and perfectly moral! And so this is all I am to have for the loss of my mistress.—Heigh ho!

> Then I must be content to see her bless
> Yon happier youth.———

*Bel.* Your raillery is a little unseasonable, Mr Modely; for, to speak plainly, I begin to suspect that this is some trick of yours, to dupe me, as well as sir John Dorilant.

*Mode.* Upon my honour, no, if we must be serious: it may be a mistake; but not intended on my side, I can assure you. Come, come, if the girl really likes you, take her. If I should prove the happy man, give me joy, and there's an end of it.

*Bel.* I fancy you are used to disappointments in love, they sit so easy upon you.—Or rather, I should suppose, in this case, you are pretty sure of your ground.

*Mode.* Neither, upon my soul; but a certain *Je ne scai quoi—Gaiete de coeur*, which carries me above misfortunes; some people call it vanity.

*Bel.* And are not absolutely mistaken. But what becomes of Araminta all this while?

*Mode.* [*Yawning.*] I shall marry her, I believe, to-morrow.

*Bel.* Marry her!

*Mode.* Yes; sir John is at this very moment looking over the settlements.

*Bel.* I don't understand you.

*Mode.* And yet it is pretty plain, methinks. I tell you I am to be married to-morrow.—Was it not time to make sure of one mistress, when you were running away with the other?

*Bel.* You know I have no such intentions.—But are you really serious? Have you laid aside your designs upon Celia?

*Mode.* Not so, neither.

*Bel.* What do you mean, then, by your marriage with Araminta? Why won't you unriddle this affair to me?

*Mode.* Because it is at present a riddle to myself, and I expect lady Beverley every moment to resolve the enigma.

*Bel.* Was it a scheme of her's?

*Mode.* Certainly, and I partly guess it, but will not unbosom till I know it fully.—Come, come, with all that gravity of countenance and curiosity, you must leave me instantly; the lady will be here, and the plot unravelled, and then——

*Bel.* I shall expect to be satisfied. [*Exit.*

*Mode.* Ha, ha, ha! or else you will fight me, I suppose. Why, so you may; and so may sir John Dorilant too, and faith with some colour of reason. But my comfort is, that I have experience on my side; and if I survive the rencounter, I shall be a greater hero than ever amongst the ladies, and be esteemed in all companies as much a man of honour as the best of you.

*Enter* LADY BEVERLEY.

*Lady Bev.* Dear cousin Modely, I am all over in an agitation; we shall certainly be discovered—that devil Araminta——

*Mode.* What of her, madam?

*Lady Bev.* Is now with her brother talking so eagerly——Oh! I saw her villainous changes in her countenance; I would have given the world to have overheard their conversation—Come, come, you must advise me instantly.

*Mode.* Your ladyship must first let me into the secret. I am absolutely in a wood with regard to the whole affair—What is all this of Celia and Belmour?

*Lady Bev.* Nothing, nothing at all; an errant dilemma of the foolish man's own making, which his impertinent sister will immediately clear up to him, and then all must come out.

*Mode.* But how came Belmour ever to be mentioned in the case?

*Lady Bev.* Dear, dear, he never was mentioned. I must confess that I was so provoked with sir John's unnatural behaviour, that I could not help telling him that Celia had a lover, and in the house, too. Your situation with regard to Araminta made him never dream of you; and consequently, all his suspicions turned on Belmour.

*Mode.* But you did not say that that lover had made his addresses to Celia?

*Lady Bev.* I don't know what I might have said; for he used me like a Turk. But whatever I said, I can unsay it again.

*Mode.* Why, if I might venture to advise a person of your ladyship's sagacity—

*Lady Bev.* O ay, with all my heart, cousin Modely. For though I may say, without vanity, that nobody has a more clear apprehension of things when the mental faculty is totally undisturbed; yet, when I am in a trepidation, nobody upon earth can be more glad of advice.

*Mode.* Why, then, madam, to speak with reverence, I should hope your ladyship would see the necessity of keeping me as concealed as possible. It is the young lady's passion, not mine, which must have the principal influence. Sir John Dorilant's peculiarity of temper is such—

*Lady Bev.* Yes, yes; he has peculiarity enough, that's certain.

*Mode.* And it is there, madam, as the weakest part, that our attack will be the surest. If she confesses an inclination for me, not both the Indies, added to her fortune, could induce him to marry her.

*Lady Bev.* That is honourable, however, cousin Modely. But he is a horrid creature, notwithstanding.

*Mode.* I grant it, madam; but a failure in an improper pursuit may recall his reason; and, as he does not want understanding, teach him to search for happiness where only it is to be expected.

*Lady Bev.* He! he! I am so angry with him at present, that I really believe I should refuse him.

*Mode.* Your ladyship must not be too cruel.

*Lady Bev.* Why, I confess it is not in my nature; but bless me! Here they come—Let us run down this walk directly, for they must not see us together. [*Exit.*

*Enter* ARAMINTA *and* SIR JOHN DORILANT.

*Ara.* Come along, I say; you dragged me into the garden just now, and I will command in my turn. Talk to her you must, and shall. The girl has sense and spirit when she is disengaged from that horrid mother of her's: and I have told her you wanted her, and in this very spot.

*Sir John.* You cannot feel, Araminta, what you make me suffer---But sooner or later it must come to this; and therefore, I will assume a resolution, and be rid of all my doubts at once.

*Ara.* I tell you, this nonsense about Belmour is merely a phantom of her mother's raising, to sound your intentions, and promote her own.

*Sir John.* Thus far is certain, that Belmour disclaims all knowledge of the affair, and with an appearance of sincerity; but even that is doubtful. Besides, they are not his, but her inclinations, which give me any concern. It is the heart I require. The lifeless form, beauteous as it is, would only elude my grasp; the shadow of a joy, not the reality.

*Ara.* Dear, dear, that men had but a little common sense! or that one could venture to tell them what one knows of one's own sex! I have a good mind to be honest------As I live, the girl is coming----I'll speed her on the way. Courage, brother! Voila! [*Exit.*

*Sir John.* How shall I begin with her?---What idiots are men, when they have a real passion! ridiculous beneath contempt——[*Walks about the stage.*]——Suppose——I will not suppose: the honest heart shall speak its faithful dictates, and if it fails———why, let it.

*Enter* CELIA.

*Celia.* [*With timidity.*] Araminta tells me, sir, that you have something to say to me.

*Sir John.* I have, madam——Come forward, Miss Beverley—Would you choose to sit?——[*They sit down.——After some irresolute gesture.*] You are not afraid of catching cold?

*Celia.* Not in the least, sir.

*Sir John.* I know sitting in the open air has that effect upon some people—but your youth and constitution——Did my sister say any thing concerning the subject I should wish to speak to you upon?

*Celia.* She only told me, sir, that it was of moment.

*Sir John.* It is of moment, indeed, Celia——But you must not think that I am angry.

*Celia.* Angry, sir!

*Sir John.* I don't mean angry—I am a little confused; but shall recover myself presently—[*Rises, and* CELIA *rises, too.*]—Nay, pray sit, Miss Beverley——Whatever I feel myself, I would not disturb you——[*Returns to his seat; then, after a pause, goes on.*]——The affair I would speak to you upon, is this:———You remember your father perfectly?

*Celia.* And ever shall.

*Sir John.* Indeed, he was a good man, Miss Beverley, a virtuous man, and felt tenderly for your happiness—Those tears become you, and yet, methinks, I would not provoke them—When he died, he left you to my care.

*Celia.* Which alone made his loss supportable.

*Sir John.* Are you sincere in what you say?

*Celia.* I should be ungrateful indeed, if I was not.

*Sir John.* [*Turning towards her.*] Nay, you are sincerity itself---O Celia! [*Taking her by the hand.*]---But I beg your pardon. I am assuming a liberty I have no right to take, till you allow it.

*Celia.* Sir!

*Sir John.* I see I have alarmed you—Retire, Miss Beverley---I'll speak to you some other time. [*She is going.*]——Celia, Miss Beverley—

pray come back, my dear---I am afraid my behaviour is rather too abrupt----Perhaps, too, it may displease you.

*Celia.* I can be displeased with nothing from you, sir; and am ready to obey you, be your commands what they will.

*Sir John.* Commands, Celia!---That's a hard word.

*Celia.* I am sorry it offends you.

*Sir John.* You know best, Celia, whether it ought to offend me---would I could read the sentiments of your heart! Mine are but too apparent---In short, my dear, you know the purport of your father's will---dare you fulfil it?

*Celia.* To the minutest circumstance---It is my duty.

*Sir John.* Ah, Celia! that word *duty* destroys the obligation.

*Celia.* Sir!

*Sir John.* I don't know how it is, but I am afraid to ask you the only question, which, sincerely answered, could make me happy---or miserable. [*Half aside.*

*Celia.* Let me beg of you, sir, to ask it freely.

*Sir John.* Well, then-----is your heart your own!----O Celia! that hesitation confirms my fears. You cannot answer in the affirmative; and have too much humanity for what I feel, to add to my torments---Good God!---and is it possible, that an acquaintance of a few days should entirely obliterate the attentive assiduity, the tender anxieties, which I have shewn for years?---but I understand it all too well. Mine were the awful, though heart-felt attentions of a parent: his, the sprightly address of a presuming lover. His easy assurance has won upon your affections; and, what I thought my greatest merit, has undone me.

*Celia.* You were so good, sir, a little while ago, to pity my confusion; pity it now; and, whilst I lay my heart open before you, be again that kind, that generous friend, which I have always found you.

*Sir John.* Go on.

*Celia.* It is in vain for me to dissemble an ignorance of your meaning; nor would I, if I could. I own I have been too much pleased with Mr Modely's conversation.

*Sir John.* Modely's!

*Celia.* Let me go on. His intended marriage with Araminta gave him a freedom in this family, which it was not my business to restrain. His attention to my mother, and the friendly manner in which he executed some commissions of consequence to her, gave him frequent opportunities of talking to me. I will confess, too, that his appearance and his manner struck me. But I was so convinced of his real passion for Araminta, that I never dreamt of the least attachment to me, till----

*Sir John.* Till what, when---Modely? Why, he is to be married to my sister to-morrow or next day!

*Celia.* I knew it was so intended; but his behaviour this morning, and the intercessions of my mother, had, I own, won upon me strangely; and induced me to believe that I only was the object of his pursuit.

*Sir John.* I am thunderstruck!----

*Celia.* My mother made me clearly perceive, that the completion of his marriage would be an injury to Araminta. She told me, too, sir, that you yourself would be my adviser in the affair, and even persuade me to accept it.

*Sir John.* O, the malicious woman!

*Celia.* In that, indeed, I perceive she greatly erred. And I only mean this as a confession of what is past, and of what is now at an end for ever. For the future, I give myself to your guidance alone, and am what you direct----

[*Giving her hand to him.*

*Sir John.* Thou amiable softness! No, Celia; however miserable I may be myself, I will not make you so; it was your heart, not your hand, I aspired to. As the former has been seduced from me, it would be an injustice to us both, to accept of the latter. As to Mr Modely, and lady Beverley, I have not deserved this treachery from them, and they shall both feel my resentment.

*Celia.* Sir!

*Sir John.* She told me, indeed, there was a favoured lover; and my suspicions fell very naturally upon Belmour. Nay, even now, nothing but that lovely sincerity---which undoes me---could make me credit this villainy of Modely. O Celia! what a heart have I lost!

*Celia.* You cannot, shall not lose it; worthless as it is, 'tis yours, and only yours, my father, guardian, lover, husband!

[*Hangs upon him, weeping.*

*Enter* ARAMINTA.

*Ara.* Hey-day! what a scene is here! What is the matter with ye both?

*Sir John.* O sister! that angel goodness, that mirror of her sex, has ruined me.

*Ara.* Ruined you! how?

*Sr John.* Nay, I am not the only sufferer:---Modely is false to you, as her mother is to all of us.

*Ara.* I don't understand you.

*Sir John.* You will too soon. My suspicions of Belmour were all a chimera; it is your impious Modely who has possession of her heart.---To me she is lost irrecoverably.---- [*Going.*

*Ara.* Stay, brother!

*Sir John.* I cannot; my soul's too full.

[*Exit.*

*Ara.* Pray, Miss Beverley, what is the meaning of all this?

*Celia.* I cannot speak——

[*Throwing herself into a chair.*

*Ara.* I'll be hanged if this fellow Modely has not talked you into an opinion, that he is in love with you. Indeed, my dear, your youth and inexperience may lead you into strange scrapes; and that mother of yours is enough to turn any girl's head in the universe. Come, come, unriddle this affair to me.

*Celia.* Alas, madam! all I know is, that the only man I ever did, or ever can esteem, despises me, and, I fear, hates me.

*Ara.* Hates you! he doats upon you to distraction. But, pray, did Modely ever make any serious addresses to you?

*Celia.* Alas! but too often.

*Ara.* The hypocrite! but I'll be even with him. And your mother, I suppose, encouraged him? An infamous woman! But I know her drift well enough———

*Enter* LADY BEVERLEY.

*Lady Bev.* Where is my poor girl? I met sir John Dorilant in such a furious way, that he seems to have lost all common civility. What have they done to you, child?

*Ara.* Done to her? What has your ladyship done to her? I knew your little artifices long ago, but——

*Lady Bev.* My artifices, Araminta!

*Ara.* Your artifices, lady Beverley; but they are all to no purpose; the girl has too good an understanding to be imposed on any longer; and your boasted machinations are as vain and empty in their effects, as in their contrivance.

*Lady Bev.* What does the woman mean? But the loss of a lover, I suppose, is an excuse for ill-breeding. Poor creature! if the petulancy of thy temper would let me, I could almost pity thee. The loss of a lover is no agreeable thing; but women at our time of life, Mrs Araminta, must not expect a lasting passion.

*Ara.* Scarce any at all I believe, if they go a wooing themselves. For my part, I have had the satisfaction of being solicited, however.—— And I am afraid my rustic brother never gave your ladyship's solicitations even the slightest encouragement. How was it? Did you find him quite hard hearted? No bowels of compassion for so accomplished a damsel?

*Celia.* [*Interposing.*] Dear madam! dear Araminta!

*Lady Bev.* Stand away, child——Desert, madam, is not always attended with success; nor confidence neither. There are some women so assured of their conquest, as even to disgust a lover on the very day of marriage.

*Ara.* Was my behaviour ever such?

*Lady Bev.* I really cannot say, Mrs Araminta; but the world, you know, is censorious enough, when a match is broken off so near its conclusion, generally to charge the inconstancy of the lover to some defect of his mistress.

*Ara.* I defy him to produce any.

*Lady Bev.* And yet he has certainly left you; never, never to return!

*Ara.* Insolent!

*Celia.* [*Interposing.*] Dear Araminta!

*Ara.* But your ladyship may be mistaken even in that, too. I may find him at his solicitations again; and if I do———

*Lady Bev.* You'll take him.

*Ara.* Take him?—Daggers and poison sooner.

*Lady Bev.* Poor creature! Come, Celia, words do but aggravate her misfortune. We only disturb her. You see, my dear, what are the effects of too violent a passion. It may be a lesson for your future conduct.

*Ara.* Look you, lady Beverley, don't provoke me.

*Lady Bev.* Why, what will ye do?

*Celia.* [*Interposing.*] For Heaven's sake, madam——

*Lady Bev.* I fancy, Mrs Araminta, instead of quarrelling, we had better join forces. If we could but get the girl out of the way, we might both succeed.

*Ara.* You are a wicked woman.

*Lady Bev.* Poor creature! shall I say any thing to my cousin Modely for you? You know I have weight with him.

*Ara.* Yes, madam; you may tell him that his connections with you have rendered him ridiculous; and that the revenge of an injured woman is never contemptible. [*Exit.*

*Lady Bev.* [*Leading off* CELIA *on the other side.*] Poor creature! Come along, child.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.—*Continues.*

*Enter* SIR JOHN DORILANT.

*Sir John.* THIS fatal spot, which draws me to it almost involuntarily, must be the scene of another interview. Thank Heaven, I have recovered myself. Nor shall any misery which I may suffer, much less any prospect of a mean revenge, make me act unbecoming my character.

*Enter* ARAMINTA.

*Ara.* Well, brother, I hope you are resolved to marry this girl?

*Sir John.* Marry her, my dear Araminta! Can

you think it possible, that I should have so preposterous a thought? No, my behaviour shall deserve, but not over-rule, her inclinations. Were I to seize the tender opportunity of her present disposition, the world would ascribe it to her fortune; and I am sure my deceased and valuable friend, however kindly he meant to me in this affair, never intended that I should make his daughter unhappy.

*Ara.* But I tell you she loves you; and you must, and shall marry her.

*Sir John.* Ah, sister, you are willing to dispose of her any way. That worthless lover of yours still hangs about your heart, and I have avoided seeing him on your account, as well as Celia's.

*Ara.* To shew how mistaken you are in all this, I have given him up totally. I despise, and hate him; nay, I am upon the brink of a resolution to give myself to another.—[SIR JOHN *shakes his head.*]—I am, I assure you; his friend, Mr Belmour, is by no means indifferent on the subject.

*Sir John.* And is this revenge on yourself, a proof of your want of passion for him?—Ah, Araminta! Come, come, my dear; I own I think him unworthy of you, and would resent his usage to the utmost, did not I clearly perceive that it would appear mercenary in myself, and give real pain both to you and Celia.

*Ara.* I actually don't know what to say to you.

*Sir John.* You had better say nothing. Your spirits, at present, are too much alarmed. I have sent for Celia hither; a short hour may determine the fate of all of us. I know my honourable intentions will give her great uneasiness. But it is my duty which exacts them from me. You had better take a turn or two in some other part of the garden: I see my steward coming this way; I may want your assistance but too soon. [*Exit* ARA.

*Enter the Steward.*

Have you brought these papers I bade you look for?

*Stew.* Yes, sir. But there is the gentleman within to wait upon your honour, concerning the estate you intended to purchase. It seems a mighty good bargain,

*Sir John.* I cannot speak to him now.

*Stew.* Your honour always used to be punctual.

*Sir John.* Alas! Jonathan, I may be punctual again to-morrow. Give me the papers. Did Miss Beverley say she would come to me?

*Stew.* Immediately, sir. But I wish your honour would consider, such bargains as these do not offer every day.

*Sir John.* Heigh ho!

*Stew.* It joins so conveniently, too, to your honour's own estate——within a hedge, as I may say.

*Sir John.* Prithee, don't plague me.

*Stew.* Nay, 'tis not my interest, but your honour's. Though that, indeed, I may call my interest, for I am sure I love your honour.

*Sir John.* I know thou dost, Jonathan; and I am too hasty—but leave me now. If the gentleman will do me the favour of staying all night, I may satisfy him in the morning. My head and heart are too full now, for any business which concerns my fortune.

[*Exit* SIR JOHN.

*Stew.* Something goes very wrong with my poor master. Some love nonsense or other, I suppose. I wish all the women were in the bottom of the sea, for my part.

[*Exit Steward.*

*Enter* LADY BEVERLEY *and* CELIA.

*Lady Bev.* I thought it requisite, sir John, as I heard you had something of importance to transact with my daughter, to wait upon you with her.

*Sir John.* Was that necessary, madam? I begged the favour of Miss Beverley's company only.

*Lady Bev.* But a mother, you know, sir John, who has a tender concern for her child——

*Sir John.* Should shew it on every occasion.

*Lady Bev.* I find, sir John, there is some misunderstanding at present, which a woman of prudence and experience might be much better consulted upon, than a poor young thing, whose—

*Sir John.* Not at all, madam; Celia has all the prudence I require, and our present conversation will soon be over.

*Lady Bev.* Nay, sir John, to be sure I am not afraid of trusting my daughter alone with you.—A man of your discretion will undoubtedly be guilty of no impropriety. But a third person, sometimes, where the parties concerned are a little too much influenced by their passions, has occasioned very substantial, and very useful effects. I have known several instances of it, in the course of my experience.

*Sir John.* This, madam, will not be one of them. How teasing? [*Walking aside.*

*Lady Bev.* I find, sir John, that you are determined to have your own way, and therefore will shew you, by my behaviour, that I know what good manners require; though I do not always meet with the same treatment from other people.

[*Exit* LADY BEV.

*Sir John.* Now, Celia, we are alone, and I have many excuses to make to you for the impassioned sallies of our late conversation, which I do most sincerely—Can you pardon them?

*Celia.* Alas! sir, 'tis I who ought to entreat pardon.

*Sir John.* Not in the least, madam; I have no blame to cast upon you for any part of your conduct. Your youth and inexperience, joined to the goodness of your heart, are sufficient apolo-

gies for any shadow of indiscretion which might appear in your behaviour. I am afraid mine was not so irreproachable. However, Celia, I shall endeavour to make you all the amends in my power; and to shew you that it is your happiness, not my own, which is the object of my anxiety. Your father's will is but too clear in its intentions. But the purity of his heart never meant to promote my felicity at the expence of yours.—You are, therefore, madam, entirely at liberty from this moment, to make your choice where you please. This paper will entitle you to that authority; and this will enable you to bestow your fortune where you bestow your hand. Take them, my dear. Why are you so disturbed?—Alas! Celia, I see too plainly the cause of these emotions. You only wish the happy man, to whom you have given your heart, loved you as I do! But I beg pardon; and will only add one caution, which my duty demands of me, as your guardian, your protector, and your father's friend. You have been a witness of Modely's transactions with my sister. Have a care, therefore, Celia! be sure of his firm attachment, before you let your own hurry you into compliance.—These papers give you up all power on my part; but, as an adviser, I shall always be ready to be consulted.

*Celia.* My tears and my confusion have hitherto hindered me from answering; not the invidious suggestion, which you have so cruelly charged me with. What friend, what lover have I, to engross my attentions? I never had but one, and he has cast me off for ever. O, sir, give me the papers, and let me return them where my soul longs to place them.

*Sir John.* No, Celia; to accept them again would impeach the justice of my whole proceeding. It would make it look like the mean artifice of a mercenary villain, who attempted to gain, by stratagem, what his merits did not entitle him to. I blush to think of it. I have performed my office. Be mistress of yourself, and let me fly from a combat to which I find myself unequal. [*Exit* SIR JOHN.

[CELIA *sits down, leaning her hand on her head.*

*Enter* MODELY *and* BELMOUR.

*Mode.* Hist! Hist! He has just left her, and in a fine situation for my approaches. If you are not yet satisfied, I will make up all differences with you another time. Get into the arbour, and be a witness of my triumph. You shall see me, like another Cæsar—Come, see, and overcome.

[BEL. *goes into the arbour.*

*Mode.* [*Comes forward, walks two or three turns by her, bowing as he passes, without being taken notice of, then speaks.*]—If it is not an interruption, madam, when I find you thus alone——

*Celia.* [*Rising.*]—I would choose to be alone.

*Mode.* Madam!

*Celia.* [*After a little pause.*]—In short, Mr Modely, your behaviour to me, of late, is what I can by no means approve of. It is unbecoming your character as a man of honour; and would be a stain to the ingenuous modesty of my sex for me to suffer.

*Mode.* You surprise me, madam! Can the adoration of an humble love—the timid advance of a man, whom your beauty has undone, be such unpardonable offences?

[CELIA *looks with indignation at him, and is going off.*

*Mode.* [*Catching hold of her, and falling on his knees.*]—Nay, madam, you must not leave me.

*Celia.* Rise, sir, or I am gone this moment. I thought of flying from you, but my soul disdains it. Know, then, sir, that I am mistress of myself; mistress of my fortune; and may bestow my hand wherever my heart directs it.

*Mode.* My angel!——

[*Coming eagerly up to her.*

*Celia.* What do you mean?

*Mode.* That you may make the most sincere of lovers the happiest of mankind. The addition of your fortune will add splendour to our felicity; and the frowns of disappointed love only heighten our enjoyments.

*Celia.* Oh, thou vile one! how does that cruel, generous man, who has rejected me, rise on the comparison!

*Mode.* Rejected you!—Sir John Dorilant!

*Celia.* Yes, Mr Modely, that triumph, at least, is yours. I have offered myself, and been refused. My hand and fortune equally disdained. But may perpetual happiness attend him, wherever his honest, honest heart shall fix!

*Mode.* O, madam, your inexperience deceives you. He knows the integrity of your mind, and trusts to that for recompense. His seeming disinterestedness is but the surer method of completing his utmost wishes.

*Celia.* Blasphemer, stop thy tongue! The purity of his intentions is as much above thy malice, as thy imitation.

[*She walks to one side of the stage, and* MODELY *stands disconcerted on the other.*

*Enter* LADY BEVERLEY.

*Lady Bev.* Well, child, what has the man said to thee? Cousin Modely, your servant! you find our plot would not take; they were too quick upon us. Hey day! what has been doing here?

*Mode.* O, madam, you are my only refuge! a wretch, on the brink of despair, flies to you for protection. That amiable creature is in ful

possession of herself and fortune, and yet rejects my tenderest solicitations.

*Lady Bev.* Really! What is all this? Tell me, Celia, has the man actually given up all right and title to thee, real and personal? Come, come; I must be a principal actress, I find, in this affair. Decency and decorum require it. Tell me, child, is it so?

*Celia.* Sir John Dorilant, madam, with a generosity peculiar to himself, (cruel generosity!) has cancelled every obligation which could confine my choice. These papers confirm the freedom he has given me——and rob me of all future comfort.

*Lady Bev.* Indeed! I did not expect this of him; but I am heartily glad of it. Give me the papers, child.

*Celia.* No, madam: useless as they are, they are yet my own.

*Lady Bev.* Useless!—What do you mean? Has the base man laid any other embargo on the child?

*Celia.* I cannot bear, madam, even from you, to hear sir John Dorilant treated with disrespect. Useless!—Yes, they shall be useless. Thus, thus, I tear them into atoms! and disdain a liberty, which but too justly reproaches my conduct.—Your advice, madam, has already made me miserable; but it shall not make me ungrateful or unjust. [*Exit* CELIA.

*Lady Bev.* I am astonished! I never saw the girl in such a way before.—Why, this is arrant disobedience, cousin Modely! I must after her, and know the bottom of it.—Don't despair.

[*Exit* LADY BEVERLEY.

*Bel.* [*Coming out of the arbour.*] Come, see, overcome!—O poor Cæsar!

*Mode.* [*Humming a tune.*] You think I am disconcerted now?

*Bel.* Why, really, I should think something of that kind.

*Mode.* You never were more mistaken in your life.—Egad! 'tis a spirited girl. She and sir John Dorilant were certainly born for one another. I have a good mind to take compassion of them, and let them come together. They must and shall be man and wife, and I will e'en go back to Araminta.

*Bel.* Thou hast a most astonishing assurance!

*Mode.* Hush!—She is coming this way!—get into your hole again, and be dumb.——Now you shall see a scene of triumph indeed.

*Bel.* Have a care, Cæsar! you have the Britons to deal with. [*Retires.*

*Enter* ARAMINTA.

*Ara.* What! are they gone, and my wretch here by himself? O that I could dissemble a little! I will, if my heart bursts for it.——O, Mr Modely, I am half ashamed to see you! but my brother has signed those odious writings!

*Mode.* Then, thus I seize my charmer!

*Ara.* Agreeable rascal! [*Aside.*]—Be quiet, can't you; you think one so forward, now.

*Mode.* I cannot, will not be restrained, when the dear object of my wishes meets me with kind compliance in her eyes and voice!———To-morrow!—'Tis an age—why should we wait for that? To-night, my angel! to-night may make us one; and the fair prospect of our halcyon days even from this hour begin.

*Ara.* Who would not think this fellow, with his blank verse now, was in earnest? But I know him thoroughly. [*Aside.*]—Indeed, Mr Modely, you are too pressing; marriage is a serious thing. Besides, you know, this idle bustle betwixt my brother and Celia, which you seem to think me ignorant of, and which you, in some measure, though undesignedly, I daresay, have occasioned, may obstruct us a little.

*Mode.* Not at all, my dear; an amusement *en passant;* the mere raillery of gallantry on my side, to oblige her impertinent mother (who, you know, has a *penchant* for sir John herself) was the whole insignificant business.———Perhaps, indeed, I was something blameable in it.

*Ara.* Why, really, I think so, in your situation. But are you sure it went no further?—nothing else passed between you?

*Mode.* Nothing in nature.

*Ara.* Dear me, how mistaken people are! I cannot say that I believed it; but they told me, that you had actually proposed to marry her; that the girl was near consenting; and that the mother was your friend in the affair.

*Mode.* The mere malice and invention of lady Beverley.

*Ara.* And there is not a word of truth in it, then?

*Mode.* Not a syllable——You know my soul is yours.

*Ara.* O thou villain!—I thought to have kept my temper, and to have treated you with the contempt you deserve; but this insolence is intolerable!—Can you imagine that I am a stranger to your proceedings? a deaf, blind idiot?——O, I could tear this foolish heart, which, cheated by its passion, has encouraged such an insult!——How, how have I deserved this treatment?

[*Bursting into tears.*

*Mode.* [*Greatly alarmed.*] By holy faith! by every power above! you, and you only, are the passion of my soul!—May every curse———

*Ara.* Away, deceiver! these tears are the tears of resentment.—My resolution melts not in my eyes. 'Tis fixed unalterably! You might imagine, from the gaiety of my temper, that it had its levity, too: But know, sir, that a woman, who has once been duped, defies all future machinations.

*Mode.* Hear me, madam!—nay, you shall hear me.———

*Ara.* Shall!—insufferable insolence!—Go, sir! for any thing which regards me, you are free as

air, free as your licentious principles. Nor shall a thought of what I once esteemed, disturb my future quiet. There are men who think me not contemptible, and under whose protection I may shelter my disgrace.—Unhand me!—This is the last time I shall probably ever see you; and I may tell you, in parting, that you have used me cruelly, and that Celia knows you as perfectly as I do. [*Exit* ARA.—MOD. *stands confounded.*

*Enter* BELMOUR.

*Bel.* Cæsar ashamed!——And well he may, 'faith!—Why, man, what is the matter with you? Quite dumb? quite confounded?—Did not I always tell you that you loved her?

*Mode.* I feel it sensibly.

*Bel.* And I can tell you another secret——

*Mode.* What's that?

*Bel.* That she loves you.

*Mode.* O that she did!

*Bel.* Did!—Every word, every motion of passion through her whole conversation, betrayed it involuntarily. I wish it had been otherwise.

*Mode.* Why?

*Bel.* Because I had some thoughts of circumventing you. But I find it will be in vain.—Therefore, pursue her properly, and she is yours.

*Mode.* O never, Belmour, never! I have sinned beyond a possibility of pardon. That she did love me, I have had a thousand proofs, which, like a brainless idiot, I wantonly trifled with.—What a pitiful rascal have I made myself?

*Bel.* Why, in that I agree with you; but don't despair, man; you may still be happier than you deserve.

*Mode.* With what face can I approach her? Every circumstance of her former affection now rises in judgment against me. O, Belmour, she has taught me to blush!

*Bel.* And I assure you it becomes you mightily.

*Mode.* Where can I apply? How can I address her? All that I can possibly do, will only look like a mean artificial method of patching up my other disappointment.

*Bel.* More miracles still! She has not only taught you to blush, but has absolutely made a man of honour of you!

*Mode.* Raillery is out of season.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* Mrs Araminta, sir, desires to speak with you.

*Mode.* [*Eagerly.*] With me?

*Ser.* No, sir, with Mr Belmour.

*Bel.* With me?

*Ser.* Yes, sir.

*Bel.* Where is she?

*Ser.* In the close walk by the house, sir.

*Bel.* And alone?

*Ser.* Entirely, sir.

*Bel.* I'll wait upon her this instant.

[*Exit Servant.*

*Mode.* Belmour, you shall not stir.

*Bel.* By my faith, but I will, sir!

*Mode.* She said there were men to whom she could fly for protection. By my soul, she intends to propose herself to you!

*Bel.* And if she does, I shall certainly accept her offer.

*Mode.* I'll cut your throat, if you do.

*Bel.* And do you think to fright me by that? I fancy I can cut throats as well as other people. Your servant. If I cannot succeed for myself, I'll speak a good word for you. [*Exit.*

*Mode.* What can this mean? I am upon thorns till I know the event. I must watch them. No, that is dishonest. Dishonest! How virtuous does a real passion make one!—Heigh ho! [*Walks about in disorder.*] He seems in great haste to go to her. He has turned into the walk already. That abominable old-fashioned cradle-work makes the hedges so thick, there is no seeing through them. An open lawn has ten thousand times the beauty, and is kept at less expence by half. These cursed unnatural chairs are always in the way, too. [*Stumbling against one of the garden-chairs.*] What a miserable dog am I?—I would give an arm to know what they are talking about. We talk of female coquettes! By my soul, we beat them at their own weapons!—Stay—one stratagem I may yet put in practice, and it is an honest one. The thought was lucky. I will about it instantly. Poor Modely! How has thy vanity reduced thee!

[*Exit.*

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—*Scene continues.*

*Enter* ARAMINTA *and* BELMOUR.

*Ara.* You find, Mr Belmour, that I have seen your partialities, and, like a woman of honour, I have confessed my own. Your behaviour to your friend is generous beyond comparison, and I could almost join in the little stratagem you propose, merely to see if he deserves it.

*Bel.* Indeed, madam, you mistake him utterly. Vanity is his ruling vice; an idle affectation of success among the ladies, which makes fools admire, and boys envy him, is the master-passion of his giddy heart. The severe checks he has met with to-day, have sufficiently opened his understanding; and the real possession of one valuable woman, whom he dreads to lose, will soon convince him how despicable his folly has made him.

*Ara.* I am afraid, Mr Belmour, a man who

has, half his life, been pursuing bubbles, without perceiving their insignificance, will be easily tempted to resume the chase. The possession of one reality will hardly convince him that the rest were shadows. And a woman must be an idiot indeed, who thinks of fixing a man to herself after marriage, whom she could not secure before it. To begin with insensibility!—O fy, Mr Modely!

*Bel.* You need not fear it, madam; his heart—

*Ara.* Is as idle as our conversation on the subject. I beg your pardon for the comparison, as I do, for having sent for you in this manner. But I thought it necessary, that both you and Mr Modely should know my real sentiments, undisguised by passion.

*Bel.* And may I hope you will concur in my proposal?

*Ara.* I don't know what to say to it; it is a piece of mummery, which I am ill suited for at present. But if an opportunity should offer, I must confess I have enough of the woman in me, not to be insensible to the charms of an innocent revenge. But this other intricate business, if you can assist me in that, you will oblige me beyond measure. They are two hearts, Mr Belmour, worthy to be united! Had my brother a little less honour, and she a little less sensibility—But I know not what to think of it.

*Bel.* In that, madam, I can certainly assist you.

*Ara.* How, dear Mr Belmour?

*Bel.* I have been a witness, unknown to Celia, to such a conversation, as will clear up every doubt sir John can possibly have entertained.

*Ara.* You charm me when you say so. As I live, here comes my brother! Stay; is not that wretch, Modely, with him? He is actually. What can his assurance be plotting now? Come this way, Mr Belmour; we will watch them at a distance, that no harm may happen between them, and talk to the girl first. The monster!

[*Exeunt.*

[*Enter* SIR JOHN DORILANT *and* MODELY.

*Mode.* [*Entering, and looking after* ARA. *and* BEL.] They are together still! But let me resume my nobler self.

*Sir John.* Why will you follow me, Mr Modely? I have purposely avoided you. My heart swells with indignation. I know not what may be the consequence.

*Mode.* Upon my honour, sir John——

*Sir John.* Honour, Mr Modely! 'tis a sacred word. You ought to shudder when you pronounce it. Honour has no existence but in the breast of truth. 'Tis the harmonious result of every virtue combined. You have sense, you have knowledge; but, I can assure you, Mr Modely, though parts and knowledge, without the dictates of justice, or the feelings of humanity, may make a bold and mischievous member of society even courted by the world, they only, in my eye, make him more contemptible.

*Mode.* This I can bear, sir John——because I have deserved it.

*Sir John.* You may think, perhaps, it is only an idle affair with a lady, what half mankind are guilty of, and what the conceited wits of your acquaintance will treat with raillery. Faith with a woman! ridiculous!—But let me tell you, Mr Modely, the man who, even slightly, deceives a believing and a trusting woman, can never be a man of honour.

*Mode.* I own the truth of your assertions. I feel the awful superiority of your real virtue. Nor should any thing have dragged me into your presence, so much I dreaded it, but the sincerest hope of making you happy.

*Sir John.* Making me happy, Mr Modely!—You have put it out of your own power. [*Walks from him, then turns to him again.*] You mean, I suppose, by a resignation of Celia to me?

*Mode.* Not of Celia only, but her affections.

*Sir John.* Vain and impotent proposal!

*Mode.* Sir John, 'tis not a time for altercation. By all my hopes of bliss here and hereafter, you are the real passion of her soul! Look not so unbelieving: by Heaven 'tis true! and nothing but an artful insinuation of your never intending to marry her, and even concurring in our affair, could ever have made her listen one moment to me.

*Sir John.* Why do I hear you?—O, Mr Modely, you touch my weakest part!

*Mode.* Cherish the tender feeling, and be happy.

*Sir John.* Is it possible that amiable creature can think and talk tenderly of me? I know her generosity; but generosity is not the point.

*Mode.* Believe me, sir, 'tis more; 'tis real unaffected passion. Her innocent soul speaks through her eyes the honest dictates of her heart. In our last conference, notwithstanding her mother's commands; notwithstanding—what I blush to own—my utmost ardent solicitations to the contrary, she persisted in her integrity, tore the papers which left her choice free, and treated us with an indignation which added charms to virtue.

*Sir John.* O these flattering sounds!—Would I could believe them!

*Mode.* Belmour, as well as myself, and lady Beverley, was a witness of the truth of them. I thought it my duty to inform you, as I know your delicacy with regard to her. And indeed I would in some measure endeavour to repair the injuries I have offered to your family, before I leave it for ever——O, sir John, let not an ill-judged nicety debar you from a happiness, which stands with open arms to receive you. Think what my folly has lost in Araminta; and, when your indignation at the affront is a little respited, be blest yourself, and pity me—[*As he goes out,*

*he still looks after* ARAMINTA *and* BELMOUR.] ——I don't see them now; but I will go round that way to the house. [*Exit* MODELY.

*Sir John.* What can this mean?——He cannot intend to deceive me; he seems too sincerely affected—I must, I will believe him. The mind, which suspects injustice, is half guilty of it itself ——Talks tenderly of me! tore the papers! treated them with indignation! Heavens! what a flow of tender joy comes over me!——Shall Celia, then, be mine? How my heart dances! O! I could be wondrous foolish!—Well, Jonathan!

*Enter* STEWARD.

*Stew.* The gentleman, sir——

*Sir John.* What of the gentleman? I am ready for any thing.

*Stew.* Will wait upon your honour to-morrow, as you are not at leisuse.

*Sir John.* With all my heart—Now or then, whenever he pleases.

*Stew.* I am glad to see your honour in spirits.

*Sir John.* Spirits, Jonathan! I am light as air —Make a thousand excuses to him——but let it be to-morrow, however, for I see lady Beverley coming this way.

*Stew.* Heaven bless his good soul! I love to see him merry. [*Exit.*

*Enter* LADY BEVERLEY.

*Lady Bev.* If I don't interrupt you, sir John—

*Sir John.* Interrupt me, madam! 'tis impossible.

*Lady Bev.* For I would not be guilty of an indecorum even to you.

*Sir John.* Come, come, lady Beverley, these little bickerings must be laid aside. Give me your hand, lady. Now we are friends. [*Kissing it.*]——How does your lovely daughter?

*Lady Bev.* You are in a mighty good humour, sir John; perhaps every body may not be so.

*Sir John.* Every body must be so, madam, where I come: I am joy itself!

"The jolly god that leads the jocund hours."

*Lady Bev.* What is come to the man!—— Whatever it is, I shall damp it presently—[*Aside.*] ——Do you choose to hear what I have to say, sir John?

*Sir John.* You can say nothing, madam, but that you consent, and Celia is my own——Yes, you yourself have been a witness to her integrity, Come, indulge me, lady Beverley. Declare it all, and let me listen to my happiness.

*Lady Bev.* I shall declare nothing, sir John, on that subject: what I have to say is of a very different import——In short, without circumlocution, or any unnecessary embarrassment to entangle the affair, I and my daughter are of opinion, that it is by no means proper for us to continue any longer in your family.

*Sir John.* Madam!

*Lady Bev.* This is what I had to declare, sir John.

*Sir John.* Does Celia, madam, desire to leave me!

*Lady Bev.* It was a proposal of her own.

*Sir John.* Confusion!

*Lady Bev.* And a very sensible one too, in my opinion. For when people are not so easy together, as might be expected, I know no better remedy than parting.

*Sir John.* [*Aside.*] Sure, this is no trick of Modely's, to get her away from me!—He talked too himself of leaving my family immediately—I shall relapse again.

*Lady Bev.* I find, sir John, you are somewhat disconcerted: but for my part—

*Sir John.* O torture!

*Lady Bev.* I say, for my part, sir John, it might have been altogether as well, perhaps, if we had never met.

*Sir John.* I am sorry, madam, my behaviour has offended you, but——

*Enter* ARAMINTA, CELIA, *and* BELMOUR.

*Ara.* [*To* CELIA, *as she enters.*] Leave the house indeed!—Come, come, you shall speak to him——What is all this disorder for? Pray, brother, has any thing new happened?—That wretch has been beforehand with us. [*Aside to* BEL.

*Lady Bev.* Nothing at all, Mrs Araminta; I have only made a very reasonable proposal to him, which he is pleased to treat with his and your usual incivility.

*Sir John.* You wrong us, madam, with the imputation—[*After a pause, and some irresolution, he goes up to* CELIA.]—I thought, Miss Beverley, I had already given up my authority, and that you were perfectly at liberty to follow your own inclinations. I could have wished, indeed, to have still assisted you with my advice; and I flattered myself that my presence would have been no restraint upon your conduct. But I find it is otherwise. My very roof is grown irksome to you, and the innocent pleasure I received in observing your growing virtues, is no longer to be indulged to me.

*Celia.* O, sir, put not so hard a construction upon what I thought a blameless proceeding. Can it be wondered at, that I should fly from him, who has twice rejected me with disdain?

*Sir John.* With disdain, Celia?

*Celia.* Who has withdrawn from me even his parental tenderness, and driven me to the hard necessity of avoiding him, lest I should offend him farther. I know how much my inexperience wants a faithful guide; I know what cruel censures a malicious world will pass upon my conduct—but I must bear them all. For he, who might protect me from myself—protect me from the insults of licentious tongues, abandons me to fortune.

*Sir John.* O, Celia!——have I, have I abandoned thee?——Heaven knows my inmost soul: how did it rejoice, but a few moments ago, when Modely told me that your heart was mine!

*Ara.* Modely!—Did Modely tell you so?—Do you hear that, Mr Belmour?

*Sir John.* He did, my sister, with every circumstance which could increase his own guilt, and her integrity.

*Ara.* This was honest, however.

*Sir John.* I thought it so, and respected him accordingly. O, he breathed comfort to a despairing wretch! but now a thousand thousand doubts crowd in upon me. He leaves my house this instant; nay, may be gone already. Celia, too, is flying from me—perhaps to join him, and, with her happier lover, smile at my undoing!—

[*Leans on* ARA.

*Celia.* I burst with indignation!—Can I be suspected of such treachery? Can you, sir, who know my every thought, harbour such a suspicion?—O, madam, this contempt have you brought upon me. A want of deceit was all the little negative praise I had to boast of, and that is now denied me. [*Leans on* L. BEV.

*Lady Bev.* Come away, child.

*Celia.* No, madam: I have a harder task still to perform. [*Comes up to* SIR JOHN.] To offer you my hand again, under these circumstances, thus despicable as you have made me, may seem an insult. But I mean it not as such—O, sir, if you ever loved my father, in pity to my orphan state, let me not leave you. Shield me from the world; shield me from the worst of misfortunes, your own unkind suspicions!

*Ara.* What fooling is here! Help me, Mr Belmour—There, take her hand—And now let it go if you can.

*Sir John.* [*Grasping her hand.*] O, Celia! may I believe Modely? Is your heart mine?

*Celia.* It is, and ever shall be.

*Sir John.* Transporting ecstacy!

[*Turning to* CELIA.

*Lady Bev.* I should think, sir John, a mother's consent——though Mrs Araminta, I see, has been so very good to take that office upon herself.

*Sir John.* I beg your pardon, madam; my thoughts were too much engaged—But may I hope for your concurrence?

*Lady Bev.* I don't know what to say to you; I think you have bewitched the girl amongst you.

*Ara.* Indeed, lady Beverley, this is quite preposterous. Ha! he here again——Protect me, Mr Belmour.

*Enter* MODELY.

*Mode.* Madam, you need fly no where for protection: you have no insolence to fear from me. I am humbled sufficiently, and the post chaise is now at the door to banish me for ever. My sole business, here, is to unite that virtuous man with the most worthy of her sex.

*Ara.* [*Half aside.*] Thank you for the compliment——Now, Mr Belmour.

*Lady Bev.* You may spare yourself the trouble, cousin Modely; the girl is irrecoverably gone already.

*Mode.* May all the happiness they deserve attend them! [*Going, then looks back at* ARA.]—I cannot leave her.

*Sir John.* Mr Modely, is there nobody here besides, whom you ought to take leave of?

*Mode.* I own my parting from that lady [*To* ARAMINTA.] should not be in silence; but a conviction of my guilt stops my tongue from utterance.

*Ara.* I cannot say I quite believe that; but as our affair may make some noise in the world, for the sake of my own character, I must beg of you to declare, before this company, whether any part of my conduct has given a shadow of excuse for the insult I have received. If it has, be honest, and proclaim it.

*Mode.* None, by heaven! the crime was all my own, and I suffer for it justly and severely—with shame I speak it, notwithstanding the appearances to the contrary, my heart was ever yours, and ever will be.

*Ara.* I am satisfied, and will honestly confess, the sole reason of my present appeal was this, that where I had destined my hand, my conduct might appear unblemished.

[*Gives her hand to* BELMOUR.

*Mode.* Confusion! then, my suspicions were just.

*Sir John.* Sister!

*Celia.* Araminta!

*Ara.* What do you mean? what are ye surprised at? The insinuating Mr Modely can never want mistresses any where. Can he, Mr Belmour? You know him perfectly.

*Mode.* Distraction! Knows me? Yes, he does know me. The villain! though he triumphs in my sufferings, knows what I feel! You, madam, are just in your severity; from you I have deserved every thing; the anguish, the despair which must attend my future life, comes from you, like Heaven's avenging minister!——But, for him! [SIR JOHN *interposes.*] O, for a sword——But I shall find a time, and a severe one. Let me go, sir John——

*Ara.* I'll carry on the farce no longer. Rash, inconsiderate madman! The sword, which pierces Mr Belmour's breast, would rob you of the best of friends. This pretended marriage, for it is no more, was merely contrived by him, to convince me of your sincerity. Embrace him as your guardian angel, and learn from him to be virtuous.

*Bel.* O, madam, let me still plead for him!—Surely, when a man feels himself in the wrong,

you cannot desire him to suffer a greater punishment.

*Ara.* I have done with fooling. You told me to-day, lady Beverley, that he would never return to me.

*Lady Bev.* And I told you, at the same time, madam, that if he did—you would take him.

*Ara.* In both you are mistaken. Mr Modely, your last behaviour to Celia and my brother, shews a generosity of temper I did not think you capable of, and for that I thank you. But to be serious on our own affair, whatever appearance your present change may carry with it, your transactions of to-day have been such, that I can never hereafter have that respect for you, which a wife ought to have for her husband.

*Sir John.* I am sorry to say it, Mr Modely, her determination is, I fear, too just. Trust to time, however; at least let us part friends, and not abruptly. We should conceal the failings of each other; and, if it must come to that, endeavour to find out specious reasons for breaking off the match, without injuring either party.

*Ara.* To shew how willing I am to conceal every thing—now I have had my little female revenge—as my brother has promised us the fiddles this evening, Mr Modely, as usual, shall be my partner in the dance.

*Mode.* I have deserved this ridicule, madam, and am humbled to what you please.

*Ara.* Why, then, brother, as we all seem in a strange dilemma, why may'nt we have one dance in the garden? it will put us in good humour.

*Sir John.* As you please, madam. Call the fiddles hither. Don't despair, Mr Modely.

[*Half aside to him.*

*Lady Bev.* I will not dance, positively.

*Bel.* Indeed, but you shall, madam; do you think I will be the only disconsolate swain who wants a partner? Besides, you see there are so few of us, that we must call in the butler and the ladies' maids even to help out the figure.

*Sir John.* Come, lady Beverley, you must lay aside all animosities. If I have behaved improperly to you to-day, I most sincerely ask your pardon, and hope the anxieties I have been under will sufficiently plead my excuse; my future conduct shall be irreproachable. [*Turning to* CELIA.] Here have I placed my happiness, and here expect it. O, Celia! if the seriousness of my behaviour should hereafter offend you, impute it to my infirmity; it can never proceed from want of affection.

A heart, like mine, its own distress contrives,
And feels, most sensibly, the pain it gives;
Then even its frailties candidly approve,
For, if it errs, it errs from too much love.

[*A dance—Exeunt omnes.*

THE

# CLANDESTINE MARRIAGE.

BY

*COLMAN & GARRICK.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### MEN.

LORD OGLEBY, *an old peer, ridiculously aping the graces of youth, but kind-hearted and benevolent, withal.*
SIR JOHN MELVIL, *nephew to* LORD OGLEBY.
STERLING, *a merchant retired from business.*
LOVEWELL, *privately married to* FANNY.
SERJEANT FLOWER, TRAVERSE, TRUEMAN, *lawyers.*
CANTON, BRUSH, *valets to* LORD OGLEBY.

### WOMEN.

MRS HEIDELBERG, *sister to* STERLING.
MISS STERLING, *her favourite niece.*
FANNY, *privately married to* LOVEWELL.
BETTY, *maid to* FANNY.
TRUSTY, *maid to* MRS HEIDELBERG.
*Chambermaid.*

*Scene*—MR STERLING'S *country house.*

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—*A room in* STERLING'S *house.*

MISS FANNY *and* BETTY *meeting.*

*Bet.* [*Running in.*] MA'AM! Miss Fanny! ma'am!

*Fan.* What's the matter, Betty?

*Bet.* Oh la! ma'am! as sure as I am alive, here is your husband———

*Fan.* Hush! my dear Betty! if any body in the house should hear you, I am ruined.

*Bet.* Mercy on me! it has frightened me to such a degree, that my heart is come up to my mouth. But, as I was saying, ma'am, here's that dear, sweet—

*Fan.* Have a care, Betty!

*Bet.* Lord! I am bewitched, I think. But, as I was a saying, ma'am, here's Mr Lovewell just come from London.

*Fan.* Indeed!

*Bet.* Yes, indeed and indeed, ma'am, he is. I saw him crossing the court-yard in his boots.

*Fan.* I am glad to hear it. But pray now, my dear Betty, be cautious. Don't mention that word again, on any account. You know, we have agreed never to drop any expressions of that sort, for fear of any accident.

*Bet.* Dear ma'am, you may depend upon me. There is not a more trustier creature on the face of the earth, than I am. Though I say it, I am as secret as the grave—and if it is never told till I tell it, it may remain untold till doom's-day for Betty.

*Fan.* I know you are faithful—but, in our circumstances, we cannot be too careful.

*Bet.* Very true, ma'am! and yet I vow and protest, there's more plague than pleasure with a secret; especially if a body may'nt mention it to four or five of one's particular acquaintance.

*Fan.* Do but keep this secret a little while longer, and then, I hope, you may mention it to any body. Mr Lovewell will acquaint the family with the nature of our situation as soon as possible.

*Bet.* The sooner the better, I believe: for if he does not tell it, there's a little tell-tale, I know of, will come and tell it for him.

*Fan.* Fy, Betty! [*Blushing.*

*Bet.* Ah! you may well blush. But you're not so sick, and so pale, and so wan, and so many qualms——

*Fan.* Have done! I shall be quite angry with you.

*Bet.* Angry!—Bless the dear puppet! I am sure I shall love it as much as if it was my own. I meant no harm, Heaven knows.

*Fan.* Well, say no more of this—It makes me uneasy—All I have to ask of you, is to be faithful and secret, and not to reveal this matter, till we disclose it to the family of ourselves.

*Bet.* Me reveal it!—If I say a word, I wish I may be burned. I would not do you any harm for the world—And as for Mr Lovewell, I am sure I have loved the dear gentleman ever since he got a tide-waiter's place for my brother—But let me tell you both, you must leave off your soft looks to each other, and your whispers, and your glances, and your always sitting next to one another at dinner, and your long walks together in the evening.—For my part, if I had not been in the secret, I should have known you were a pair of lovers at least, if not man and wife, as—

*Fan.* See there now again! Pray, be careful.

*Bet.* Well—well—nobody hears me.—Man and wife.—I'll say no more—what I tell you is very true for all that——

*Love.* [*Calling within.*] William!

*Bet.* Hark! I hear your husband——

*Fan.* What!

*Bet.* I say, here comes Mr Lovewell—Mind the caution I give you—I'll be whipped now, if you are not the first person he sees or speaks to in the family! However, if you choose it, it's nothing at all to me—as you sow, so you must reap—as you brew, so you must bake.—I'll e'en slip down the back-stairs and leave you together. [*Exit.*

*Fan.* I see, I see I shall never have a moment's ease, till our marriage is made public. New distresses crowd in upon me every day. The solicitude of my mind sinks my spirits, preys upon my health, and destroys every comfort of my life. It shall be revealed, let what will be the consequence.

*Enter* LOVEWELL.

*Love.* My love!—How's this?—In tears?—Indeed, this is too much. You promised me to support your spirits, and to wait the determination of our fortune with patience. For my sake, for your own, be comforted! Why will you study to add to our uneasiness and perplexity?

*Fan.* Oh, Mr Lovewell! the indelicacy of a secret marriage grows every day more and more shocking to me. I walk about the house like a guilty wretch: I imagine myself the object of the suspicion of the whole family; and am under the perpetual terrors of a shameful detection.

*Love.* Indeed, indeed, you are to blame. The amiable delicacy of your temper, and your quick sensibility, only serve to make you unhappy.—To clear up this affair properly to Mr Sterling, is the continual employment of my thoughts. Every thing now is in a fair train. It begins to grow ripe for a discovery; and I have no doubt of its concluding to the satisfaction of ourselves, of your father, and the whole family.

*Fan.* End how it will, I am resolved it shall end soon—very soon. I would not live another week in this agony of mind to be mistress of the universe.

*Love.* Do not be too violent neither. Do not let us disturb the joy of your sister's marriage with the tumult this matter may occasion—I have brought letters from lord Ogleby and sir John Melvil to Mr Sterling. They will be here this evening—and, I dare say, within this hour.

*Fan.* I am sorry for it.

*Love.* Why so?

*Fan.* No matter—Only let us disclose our marriage immediately!

*Love.* As soon as possible.

*Fan.* But directly.

*Love.* In a few days, you may depend on it.

*Fan.* To-night—or to-morrow morning.

*Love.* That, I fear, will be impracticable.

*Fan.* Nay, but you must.

*Love.* Must! Why?

*Fan.* Indeed you must.—I have the most alarming reasons for it.

*Love.* Alarming, indeed! for they alarm me, even before I am acquainted with them—What are they?

*Fan.* I cannot tell you.

*Love.* Not tell me?

*Fan.* Not at present. When all is settled, you shall be acquainted with every thing.

*Love.* Sorry they are coming!—Must be discovered!—What can this mean? Is it possible you can have any reasons that need be concealed from me?

*Fan.* Do not disturb yourself with conjectures—but rest assured, that though you are unable to divine the cause, the consequence of a discovery, be it what it will, cannot be attended with half the miseries of the present interval.

*Love.* You put me upon the rack.—I would do any thing to make you easy.——But you know your father's temper.—Money (you will excuse my frankness) is the spring of all his actions, which nothing but the idea of acquiring nobility or magnificence, can ever make him forego——

and these he thinks his money will purchase.—You know, too, your aunt's, Mrs Heidelberg's, notions of the splendour of high life; her contempt for every thing that does not relish of what she calls quality; and that, from the vast fortune in her hands, by her late husband, she absolutely governs Mr Sterling and the whole family: now, if they should come to the knowledge of this affair too abruptly, they might, perhaps, be incensed beyond all hopes of reconciliation.

*Fan.* But if they are made acquainted with it otherwise than by ourselves, it will be ten times worse: and a discovery grows every day more probable. The whole family have long suspected our affection. We are also in the power of a foolish maid-servant; and if we may even depend on her fidelity, we cannot answer for her discretion.—Discover it therefore, immediately, lest some accident should bring it to light, and involve us in additional disgrace.

*Love.* Well—well—I mean to discover it soon, but would not do it too precipitately. I have more than once sounded Mr Sterling about it, and will attempt him more seriously the next opportunity. But my principal hopes are these: My relationship to lord Ogleby, and his having placed me with your father, have been, you know, the first links in the chain of this connection between the two families; in consequence of which, I am at present in high favour with all parties. While they all remain thus well affected to me, I propose to lay our case before the old lord; and, if I can prevail on him to mediate in this affair, I make no doubt but he will be able to appease your father; and, being a lord, and a man of quality, I am sure he may bring Mrs Heidelberg into good humour at any time. Let me beg you, therefore, to have but a little patience, as, you see, we are upon the very eve of a discovery, that must probably be to our advantage.

*Fan.* Manage it your own way. I am persuaded.

*Love.* But, in the mean time, make yourself easy.

*Fan.* As easy as I can, I will. We had better not remain together any longer at present. Think of this business, and let me know how you proceed.

*Love.* Depend on my care! But, pray, be cheerful.

*Fan.* I will.

*As she is going out, enter* STERLING.

*Ster.* Hey day! who have we got here?

*Fan.* [*Confused.*] Mr Lovewell, sir!

*Ster.* And where are you going, hussy?

*Fan.* To my sister's chamber, sir. [*Exit* FAN.

*Ster.* Ah, Lovewell! What! always getting my foolish girl, yonder, into a corner?—Well—well—let us but once see her eldest sister fast married to sir John Melvil, we'll soon provide a good husband for Fanny, I warrant you.

*Love.* Would to Heaven, sir, you would provide her one of my recommendation!

*Ster.* Yourself! eh, Lovewell?

*Love.* With your pleasure, sir.

*Ster.* Mighty well!

*Love.* And I flatter myself, that such a proposal would not be very disagreeable to Miss Fanny.

*Ster.* Better and better!

*Love.* And if I could but obtain your consent, sir———

*Ster.* What! you marry Fanny!—no—no—that will never do, Lovewell!——You're a good boy, to be sure—I have a great value for you—but can't think of you for a son-in-law.—There's no stuff in the case; no money, Lovewell!

*Love.* My pretensions to fortune, indeed, are but moderate; but, though not equal to splendour, sufficient to keep us above distress.—Add to which, that I hope, by diligence, to increase it—and have love, honour——

*Ster.* But not the stuff, Lovewell!—Add one little round O to the sum total of your fortune, and that will be the finest thing you can say to me. You know I've a regard for you—would do any thing to serve you—any thing on the footing of friendship—but——

*Love.* If you think me worthy of your friendship, sir, be assured, that there is no instance in which I should rate your friendship so highly.

*Ster.* Psha! psha! that's another thing, you know. Where money or interest is concerned, friendship is quite out of the question.

*Love.* But where the happiness of a daughter is at stake, you would not scruple, sure, to sacrifice a little to her inclinations?

*Ster.* Inclinations! why, you would not persuade me that the girl is in love with you—eh, Lovewell?

*Love.* I cannot absolutely answer for Miss Fanny, sir; but am sure that the chief happiness or misery of my life depends entirely upon her.

*Ster.* Why, indeed, now, if your kinsman, lord Ogleby, would come down handsomely for you—but that's impossible—No, no—'twill never do—I must hear no more of this—Come, Lovewell, promise me that I shall hear no more of this.

*Love.* [*Hesitating,*] I am afraid, sir, I should not be able to keep my word with you, if I did promise you.

*Ster.* Why, you would not offer to marry her without my consent! would you, Lovewell?

*Love.* Marry her, sir! [*Confused.*

*Ster.* Ay, marry her, sir!—I know very well that a warm speech or two from such a dangerous young spark as you are, would go much farther towards persuading a silly girl to do what she has more than a month's mind to do, than twenty grave lectures from fathers or mothers, or uncles or aunts, to prevent her. But you would not, sure, be such a base fellow, such a

treacherous young rogue, as to seduce my daughter's affections, and destroy the peace of my family in that manner? I must insist on it, that you give me your word not to marry her without my consent.

*Love.* Sir—I—I—as to that—I—I—beg, sir, ——Pray, sir, excuse me on this subject at present.

*Ster.* Promise, then, that you will carry this matter no farther without my approbation.

*Love.* You may depend on it, sir, that it shall go no further.

*Ster.* Well—well—that's enough—I'll take care of the rest, I warrant you. Come, come; let's have done with this nonsense!—What's doing in town? Any news upon 'Change?

*Love.* Nothing material.

*Ster.* Have you seen the currants, the soap, and Madeira safe in the warehouses? Have you compared the goods with the invoice and bills of lading, and are they all right?

*Love.* They are, sir.

*Ster.* And how are stocks?

*Love.* Fell one and a half this morning.

*Ster.* Well, well—some good news from America, and they'll be up again.——But how are lord Ogleby and sir John Melvil? When are we to expect them?

*Love.* Very soon, sir. I came on purpose to bring you their commands. Here are letters from both of them. [*Giving letters.*

*Ster.* Let me see—let me see—'Slife, how his lordship's letter is perfumed!—It takes my breath away. [*Opening it.*] And French paper, too! with a fine border of flowers and flourishes—and a slippery gloss on it that dazzles one's eyes. 'My 'dear Mr Sterling.' [*Reading.*] Mercy on me! his lordship writes a worse hand than a boy at his exercise.——But how's this?—Eh!—'with you to 'night'—[*Reading.*]—'Lawyers to morrow morn-'ing'—To night!——that's sudden, indeed—— Where's my sister Heidelberg? she should know of this immediately. Here, John! Harry! Thomas! [*Calling the servants.*] Hark ye, Lovewell!

*Love.* Sir!

*Ster.* Mind now, how I'll entertain his lordship and sir John—We'll shew your fellows at the other end of the town how we live in the city—They shall eat gold—and drink gold—and lie in gold, Here, cook! butler! [*Calling.*] What signifies your birth, and education, and titles! ——Money, money!—that's the stuff that makes the great man in this country.

*Love.* Very true, sir.

*Ster.* True, sir!——Why, then, have done with your nonsense of love and matrimony. You're not rich enough to think of a wife yet. A man of business should mind nothing but his business. ——Where are these fellows?—John! Thomas! [*Calling.*]——Get an estate, and a wife will follow of course.——Ah, Lovewell! an English merchant is the most respectable character in the universe.——'Slife, man, a rich English merchant may make himself a match for the daughter of a nabob.——Where are all my rascals? Here, William! [*Exit* STER. *calling.*

*Love.* So—as I suspected.——Quite averse to the match, and likely to receive the news of it with great displeasure.———What's best to be done?——Let me see!—Suppose I get sir John Melvil to interest himself in this affair. He may mention it to lord Ogleby with a better grace than I can, and more probably prevail on him to interfere in it. I can open my mind also more freely to sir John. He told me, when I left him in town, that he had something of consequence to communicate, and that I could be of use to him. I am glad of it: for the confidence he reposes in me, and the service I may do him, will ensure me his good offices.—Poor Fanny! It hurts me to see her so uneasy, and her making a mystery of the cause adds to my anxiety.—Something must be done upon her account; for, at all events, her solicitude shall be removed. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to another apartment.*

*Enter* MISS STERLING *and* MISS FANNY.

*Miss Ster.* Oh, my dear sister, say no more! This is downright hypocrisy. You shall never convince me that you don't envy me beyond measure. Well, after all, it is extremely natural—It is impossible to be angry with you.

*Fan.* Indeed, sister, you have no cause.

*Miss Ster.* And you really pretend not to envy me?

*Fan.* Not in the least.

*Miss Ster.* And you don't in the least wish that you was just in my situation?

*Fan.* No, indeed, I don't. Why should I?

*Miss Ster.* Why should you! What! on the brink of marriage, fortune, title! But I had forgot—There's that dear sweet creature, Mr Lovewell, in the case. You would not break your faith with your true love now, for the world, I warrant you.

*Fan.* Mr Lovewell!—Always Mr Lovewell! Lord, what signifies Mr Lovewell, sister?

*Miss Ster.* Pretty peevish soul! Oh, my dear, grave, romantic sister!—A perfect philosopher in petticoats!—Love and a cottage!—Eh, Fanny? ——Ah, give me indifference, and a coach and six!——

*Fan.* And why not the coach and six, without the indifference? But, pray, when is this happy marriage of yours to be celebrated? I long to give you joy.

*Miss Ster.* In a day or two—I cannot tell exactly—Oh, my dear sister! I must mortify her a little.—[*Aside.*]—I know you have a pretty taste. Pray, give me your opinion of my jewels. How do you like the style of this esclavage?

[*Shewing jewels.*

*Fan.* Extremely handsome, indeed; and well fancied.

*Miss Ster.* What d'ye think of these bracelets? I shall have a miniature of my father set round with diamonds, to one, and sir John's to the other. And this pair of ear-rings! set transparent! here, the tops, you see, will shake off to wear in a morning, or in an undress—how d'ye like them? [*Shews jewels.*

*Fan.* Very much, I assure you—Bless me, sister, you have a prodigious quantity of jewels!—You'll be the very queen of diamonds!

*Miss Ster.* Ha, ha, ha! Very well, my dear! I shall be as fine as a little queen, indeed. I have a bouquet to come home to-morrow—made up of diamonds, and rubies, and emeralds, and topazes, and amethysts—jewels of all colours, green, red, blue, yellow, intermixt—the prettiest thing you ever saw in your life! The jeweller says, I shall set out with as many diamonds as any body in town, except lady Brilliant, and Polly What-d'ye call it, lord Squander's kept mistress.

*Fan.* But what are your wedding-clothes, sister?

*Miss Ster.* Oh, white and silver, to be sure, you know. I bought them at sir Joseph Lutestring's, and sat above an hour in the parlour behind the shop, consulting lady Lutestring about gold and silver stuffs, on purpose to mortify her.

*Fan.* Fie, sister! How could you be so abominably provoking?

*Miss Ster.* Oh, I have no patience with the pride of your city-knights' ladies. Did you ever observe the airs of lady Lutestring, drest in the richest brocade out of her husband's shop, playing crown whist at Haberdasher's Hall—Whilst the civil smirking sir Joseph, with a snug wig trimmed round his broad face, as close as a new-cut yew-hedge, and his shoes so black that they shine again, stands all day in his shop, fastened to his counter like a bad shilling!

*Fan.* Indeed, indeed, sister, this is too much—If you talk at this rate, you will be absolutely a by-word in the city——You must never venture on the inside of Temple-bar again.

*Miss Ster.* Never do I desire it—never, my dear Fanny, I promise you. Oh, how I long to be transported to the dear regions of Grosvenor-square—far—far from the dull districts of Aldersgate, Cheap, Candlewick, and Farringdon Without and Within!—My heart goes pit-a-pat at the very idea of being introduced at court!—Gilt chariot!—Pyebald horses!—Laced liveries!—and then the whispers buzzing round the circle—'Who is that young lady? Who is she?'—'Lady Melvil, madam!'—Lady Melvil! My ears tingle at the sound. And then at dinner, instead of my father perpetually asking—'Any news upon 'Change?'—To cry—'Well, sir John, any thing new from Arthur's?'—Or, to say to some other woman of quality—'Was your ladyship at the duchess of Rubber's last night? Did you call in at lady Thunder's? In the immensity of crowd, I swear I did not see you—scarce a soul at the opera last Saturday—shall I see you at Carlisle house next Thursday?'—Oh, the dear beau monde! I was born to move in the sphere of the great world.

*Fan.* And so, in the midst of all this happiness, you have no compassion for me—no pity for us poor mortals in common life.

*Miss Ster.* [*Affectedly.*]—You? You're above pity. You would not change conditions with me. You're over head and ears in love, you know. Nay, for that matter, if Mr Lovewell and you come together, as I doubt not you will, you will live very comfortably, I dare say. He will mind his business—you'll employ yourself in the delightful care of your family—and once in a season, perhaps, you'll sit together in a front box at a benefit play, as we used to do at our dancing-master's, you know—and, perhaps, I may meet you in the summer, with some other citizens, at Tunbridge. For my part, I shall always entertain a proper regard for my relations. You shan't want my countenance, I assure you.

*Fan.* Oh, you're too kind, sister!

*Enter* MRS HEIDELBERG.

*Mrs Heid.* [*At entering.*]—Here this evening! I vow and protest we shall scarce have time to provide for them——Oh, my dear!—[*To* MISS STER.]—I am glad to see you're not quite in a dishabille. Lord Ogleby and sir John Melvil will be here to-night.

*Miss Ster.* To-night, madam?

*Mrs Heid.* Yes, my dear, to-night. Oh, put on a smarter cap, and change those ordinary ruffles!—Lord, I have such a deal to do, I shall scarce have time to slip on my Italian lutestring. Where is this dawdle of a house-keeper?

*Enter* MRS TRUSTY.

Oh, here, Trusty! Do you know that people of qualaty are expected here this evening?

*Trus.* Yes, madam.

*Mrs Heid.* Well—Do you be sure, now, that every thing is done in the most genteelest manner—and to the honour of the famaly.

*Trus.* Yes, madam.

*Mrs Heid.* Well—but mind what I say to you.

*Trus.* Yes, madam.

*Mrs Heid.* His lordship is to lie in the chintz bed-chamber—d'ye hear? and sir John in the blue damask-room—his lordship's valet-de-shamb in the opposite——

*Trus.* But Mr Lovewell is come down—and you know that's his room, madam.

*Mrs Heid.* Well—well—Mr Lovewell may make shift—or get a bed at the George. But hark ye, Trusty!

*Trus.* Madam!

*Mrs Heid.* Get the great dining-room in order, as soon as possable. Unpaper the curtains;

take the civers off the couch and the chairs; and put the china figures on the mantle piece immediately.

*Trus.* Yes, madam.

*Mrs Heid.* Be gone, then! Fly, this instant! Where's my brother Sterling?

*Trus.* Talking to the butler, madam.

*Mrs Heid.* Very well.—[*Exit* TRUSTY.]—Miss Fanny! I pertest I did not see you before—Lord, child, what's the matter with you?

*Fan.* With me! Nothing, madam.

*Mrs Heid.* Bless me! Why, your face is as pale, and black, and yellow—of fifty colours, I pertest. And then you have drest yourself as loose and as big—I declare there is not such a thing to be seen now, as a young woman with a fine waist——You all make yourselves as round as Mrs Deputy Barter. Go, child! You know the qualaty will be here by and by. Go, and make yourself a little more fit to be seen.—[*Exit* FANNY.]—She is gone away in tears—absolutely crying, I vow and pertest. This ridicalous love! We must put a stop to it. It makes a perfect nataral of the girl.

*Miss Ster.* Poor soul! She cannot help it. [*Affectedly.*

*Mrs Heid.* Well, my dear! Now I shall have an opportoonity of convincing you of the absurdity of what you was telling me concerning sir John's Melvil's behaviour to you.

*Miss Ster.* Oh, it gives me no manner of uneasiness. But, indeed, madam, I cannot be persuaded but that sir John is an extremely cold lover. Such distant civility, grave looks, and lukewarm professions of esteem for me and the whole family! I have heard of flames and darts; but sir John's is a passion of mere ice and snow.

*Mrs Heid.* Oh fie, my dear! I am perfectly ashamed of you. That's so like the notions of your poor sister! What you complain of as coldness and indiffarence, is nothing but the extreme gentilaty of his address, an exact pictur of the manners of qualaty.

*Miss Ster.* Oh, he is the very mirror of complaisance! full of formal bows and set speeches! I declare, if there was any violent passion on my side, I should be quite jealous of him.

*Mrs Heid.* I say, jealus indeed——Jealus of who, pray?

*Miss Ster.* My sister Fanny. She seems a much greater favourite than I am, and he pays her infinitely more attention, I assure you.

*Mrs Heid.* Lord! d'ye think a man of fashion, as he is, cannot distinguish between the genteel and the vulgar part of the famaly?——between you and your sister, for instance—or me and my brother?——Be advised by me, child! It is all puliteness and good-breeding. Nobody knows the qualaty better than I do.

*Miss Ster.* In my mind, the old lord, his uncle, has ten times more gallantry about him than sir John. He is full of attentions to the ladies, and smiles, and grins, and leers, and ogles, and fills every wrinkle of his old wizen face with comical expressions of tenderness. I think he would make an admirable sweetheart.

*Enter* STERLING.

*Ster.* [*At entering.*] No fish?—Why, the pond was dragged but yesterday morning—There's carp and tench in the boat.——Pox on't! if that dog Lovewell had any thought, he would have brought down a turbot, or some of the land-carriage mackrell.

*Mrs Heid.* Lord, brother, I am afraid his lordship and sir John will not arrive while it is light!

*Ster.* I warrant you.——But, pray, sister Heidelberg, let the turtle be dressed to-morrow, and some venison——and let the gardener cut some pine-apples—and get out some ice.——I'll answer for wine, I warrant you—I'll give them such a glass of champagne as they never drank in their lives—no, not at a duke's table.

*Mrs Heid.* Pray now, brother, mind how you behave. I am always in a fright about you with people of qualaty. Take care that you don't fall asleep directly after supper, as you commonly do. Take a good deal of snuff, and that will keep you awake—And don't burst out with your horrible loud horse laughs. It is monstrous wulgar.

*Ster.* Never fear, sister!—Who have we here?

*Mrs Heid.* It is Mons. Cantoon, the Swish gentleman, that lives with his lordship, I vow and pertest.

*Enter* CANTON.

*Ster.* Ah, mounseer! your servant.—I am very glad to see you, mounseer.

*Can.* Mosh oblige to Mons. Sterling.—Ma'am, I am yours—Matemoiselle, I am yours. [*Bowing round.*

*Mrs Heid.* Your humble servant, Mr Cantoon!

*Can.* I kiss your hands, matam!

*Ster.* Well, mounseer!—and what news of your good family?—when are we to see his lordship and sir John?

*Can.* Mons. Sterling! Milor Ogleby and sir Jean Melville will be here in one quarter-hour.

*Ster.* I am glad to hear it.

*Mrs Heid.* O, I am perdigious glad to hear it. Being so late, I was afread of some accident.—Will you please to have any thing, Mr Cantoon, after your journey?

*Can.* No, I tank you, ma'am.

*Mrs Heid.* Shall I go and shew you the apartments, sir?

*Can.* You do me great honeur, ma'am.

*Mrs Heid.* Come, then!—come, my dear! [*To* MISS STERLING.—*Exeunt.*

*Ster.* Pox on't, its almost dark!—It will be too late to go round the garden this evening.—However, I will carry them to take a peep at my fine canal at least, I am determined. [*Exit.*

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An anti-chamber to* LORD OGLEBY'S *bed-chamber. Table with chocolate, and small case for medicines.*

*Enter* BRUSH, *my lord's valet-de-chambre, and* STERLING'S *chambermaid.*

*Brush.* YOU shall stay, my dear; I insist upon it.

*Cham.* Nay, pray, sir, don't be so positive; I cannot stay, indeed.

*Brush.* You shall drink one cup to our better acquaintance.

*Cham.* I seldom drinks chocolate; and, if I did, one has no satisfaction with such apprehensions about one—If my lord should wake, or the Swish gentleman should see one, or madam Heidelberg should know of it, I should be frighted to death; besides, I have had my tea already this morning.—I am sure I hear my lord! [*In a fright.*

*Brush.* No, no, madam; don't flutter yourself—the moment my lord wakes, he rings his bell; which I answer, sooner or later, as it suits my convenience.

*Cham.* But should he come upon us without ringing———

*Brush.* I'll forgive him if he does—This key [*Takes a phial out of the case.*] locks him up till I please to let him out.

*Cham.* Law! sir, that's pothecary's stuff.

*Brush.* It is so—but without this he can no more get out of bed—than he can read without spectacles—[*Sips.*] What with qualms, age, rheumatisms, and a few surfeits in his youth, he must have a great deal of brushing, oiling, screwing, and winding up, to set him a-going for the day.

*Cham.* [*Sips.*] That's prodigious, indeed——[*Sips.*] My lord seems quite in a decay.

*Brush.* Yes, he is quite a spectacle, [*Sips.*]—a mere corpse, till he is revived and refreshed from our little magazine here—When the restorative pills, and cordial waters warm his stomach, and get into his head, vanity frisks in his heart; and then he sets up for the lover, the rake, and the fine gentleman.

*Cham.* [*Sips.*] Poor gentleman! but should the Swish gentleman come upon us.

[*Frightened.*

*Brush.* Why, then, the English gentleman would be very angry. No foreigner must break in upon my privacy. [*Sips.*] But I can assure you Monsieur Canton is otherwise employed—He is obliged to skim the cream of half a score newspapers for my lord's breakfast—ha, ha! Pray, madam, drink your cup peaceably—My lord's chocolate is remarkably good; he won't touch a drop, but what comes from Italy.

*Cham.* [*Sipping.*] 'Tis very fine, indeed! [*Sips.*] and charmingly perfumed—it smells for all the world like our young ladies' dressing-boxes.

*Brush.* You have an excellent taste, madam; and I must beg of you to accept of a few cakes for your own drinking, [*Takes them out of a drawer in the table.*] and, in return, I desire nothing but to taste the perfume of your lips.—[*Kisses her.*] A small return of favours, madam, will make, I hope, this country and retirement agreeable to us both. [*He bows, she curtsies.*]—Your young ladies are fine girls, faith: [*Sips.*] though, upon my soul, I am quite of my old lord's mind about them; and, were I inclined to matrimony, I should take the youngest. [*Sips.*

*Cham.* Miss Fanny's the most affablest, and the most best natured creter!———

*Brush.* And the eldest a little haughty or so——

*Cham.* More haughtier and prouder than Saturn himself——but this I say quite confidential to you; for one would not hurt a young lady's marriage, you know. [*Sips.*

*Brush.* By no means; but you cannot hurt it with us——we don't consider tempers; we want money, Mrs Nancy. Give us plenty of that, we'll abate you a great deal in other particulars, ha, ha, ha!

*Cham.* Bless me, here's somebody! [*Bell rings.*] Oh, 'tis my lord! Well, your servant, Mr Brush——I'll clean the cups in the next room.

*Brush.* Do so———but never mind the bell———I shan't go this half hour. Will you drink tea with me in the afternoon?

*Cham.* Not for the world, Mr Brush—I'll be here to set all things to rights———But I must not drink tea, indeed———and so your servant.

[*Exit with tea-board. Bell rings.*

*Brush.* It is impossible to stupify one's self in the country for a week, without some little flirting with the Abigails: this is much the handsomest wench in the house, except the old citizen's youngest daughter, and I have not time enough to lay a plan for her. [*Bell rings.*] And now I'll go to my lord, for I have nothing else to do.

[*Going.*

*Enter* CANTON, *with newspapers in his hand.*

*Can.* Monsieur Brush! Maistre Brush! my lor stirra yet?

*Brush.* He has just rung his bell———I am going to him. [*Exit.*

*Can.* Depechez vous donc. [*Puts on his spectacles.*] I wish de devèil had all dese papiers——I forget as fast as I read———de Advertise put out of my head de Gazette, de Chronique, and so dey all go l'un aprés l'autre———I must get some nouvelle for my lor, or he'll be enragé contre moi. Voyons! [*Reads the paper.*] Here is nothing but Anti-sejanus & advertise———

*Enter Maid with chocolate things.*

Vat you want, child?

*Maid.* Only the chocolate things, sir.

*Can.* O, ver well; dat is good girl; and very prit, too. [*Exit Maid.*

*Lord Ogle.* [*Within.*] Canton! he he!——— [*Coughs.*] Canton!———

*Can.* I come, my lor! vat shall I do? I have no news: he will make great tintamarre!—

*Lord Ogle.* [*Within.*] Canton! I say, Canton! Where are you?

*Enter* LORD OGLEBY, *leaning on* BRUSH.

*Can.* Here, my lor; I ask pardon, my lor; I have not finish de papiers.

*Lord Ogle.* Damn your pardon, and your papiers; I want you here, Canton.

*Can.* Den I run, dat is all.

[*Shuffles along.* LORD OGLEBY *leans upon* CANTON, *too, and comes forward.*]

*Lord Ogle.* You Swiss are the most unaccountable mixture; you have the language and the impertinence of the French, with the laziness of the Dutchmen.

*Can.* 'Tis very true, my lor; I can't help------

*Lord Ogle.* [*Cries out.*] O Diavolo!

*Can.* You are not in pain, I hope, my lor?

*Lord Ogle.* Indeed, but I am, my lor. That vulgar fellow, Sterling, with his city politeness, would force me down his slope last night to see a clay-coloured ditch, which he calls a canal; and what with the dew, and the east wind, my hips and shoulders are absolutely screwed to my body.

*Can.* A little veritable eau d'arquibusade vil set all to right again.

[LORD OGLEBY *sits down, and* BRUSH *gives chocolate.*

*Lord Ogle.* Where are the palsy drops, Brush?

*Brush.* Here, my lord! [*Pouring out.*

*Lord Ogle.* Quelle nouvelle avez vous, Canton?

*Can.* A great deal of papier, but no news at all.

*Lord Ogle.* What! nothing at all, you stupid fellow?

*Can.* Yes, my lor, I have little advertise here vil give you more plaisir den all the lies about nothing at all. La voila!

[*Puts on his spectacles.*

*Lord Ogle.* Come, read it, Canton, with good emphasis, and good discretion.

*Can.* I vil, my lor. [CANTON *reads.*] 'Dere is 'no question, but that the Cosmetique Royale 'vil utterly take away all heats, pimps, frecks, 'oder eruptions of de skin, and likewise de 'wrinque of old age, &c. &c.' A great deal more, my lor. 'Be sure to ask for de Cosme-'tique Royale, signed by the Docteur own hand. 'Dere is more raison for dis caution dan good 'men vil think.' Eh bien, my lor!

*Lord Ogle.* Eh bien, Canton! Will you purchase any?

*Can.* For you, my lor?

*Lord Ogle.* For me, you old puppy! for what?

*Can.* My lor!

*Lord Ogle.* Do I want cosmeticks?

*Can.* My lor!

*Lord Ogle.* Look in my face———come, be sincere. Does it want the assistance of art?

*Can.* [*With his spectacles.*] En verite non—'Tis very smoose and brillian———but tote dat you might take a little by way of prevention.

*Lord Ogle.* You thought like an old fool, monsieur, as you generally do. The surfeit water, Brush! [BRUSH *pours out.*] What do you think, Brush, of this family we are going to be connected with? Eh!

*Brush.* Very well to marry in, my lord; but it would never do to live with.

*Lord Ogle.* You are right, Brush———There is no washing the blackamoor white———Mr Sterling will never get rid of Blackfriars—always taste of the Borachio—and the poor woman, his sister, is so busy, and so notable, to make one welcome, that I have not yet got over her first reception; it almost amounted to suffocation! I think the daughters are tolerable. Where's my cephalic snuff? [BRUSH *gives him a box.*]

*Can.* Dey tink so of you, my lor, for dey look at no ting else, ma foi.

*Lord Ogle.* Did they? Why, I think they did a little—Where's my glass? [BRUSH *puts one on the table.*] The youngest is delectable.

[*Takes snuff.*

*Can.* O oui, my lor, very delect, inteed; she made doux yeux at you, my lor.

*Lord Ogle.* She was particular. The eldest, my nephew's lady, will be a most valuable wife; she has all the vulgar spirits of her father and aunt, happily blended with the termagant qualities of her deceased mother. Some peppermint water, Brush. How happy is it, Canton, for young ladies in general, that people of quality overlook every thing in a marriage-contract but their fortune.

*Can.* C'est bien heureux, et commode aussi.

*Lord Ogle.* Brush, give me that pamphlet by my bed side——[BRUSH *goes for it.*] Canton, do you wait in the anti-chamber, and let nobody interrupt me till I call you.

*Can.* Mush good may do your lordship.

*Lord Ogle.* [*To* BRUSH, *who brings the pamphlet.*] And now, Brush, leave me a little to my studies. [*Exit* BRUSH.]——What can I possibly do among these women here, with this confounded rheumatism? It is a most grievous enemy to gallantry and address. [*Gets off his chair.*] He! courage, my lor! by Heavens, I'm another creature! [*Hums and dances a little.*] It will do, faith!——Bravo, my lor! these girls have absolutely inspired me———If they are for a game of romps——Me voila pret! [*Sings and dances.*]

———Oh!—that's an ugly twinge—but its gone ———I have rather too much of the lily this morning in my complexion; a faint tincture of the rose will give a delicate spirit to my eyes for the day. [*Unlocks a drawer at the bottom of the glass, and takes out rouge: while he is painting himself, a knocking at the door.*] Who's there? I won't be disturbed.

*Can.* [*Without.*] My lor! my lor! here is Monsieur Sterling, to pay his devoir to you this morn in your chambre.

*Lord Ogle.* [*Softly.*] What a fellow! [*Aloud.*] I am extremely honoured by Mr Sterling—Why don't you see him in, monsieur?—I wish he was at the bottom of his stinking canal. [*Door opens.*] Oh, my dear Mr Sterling, you do me a great deal of honour!

*Enter* STERLING *and* LOVEWELL.

*Ster.* I hope, my lord, that your lordship slept well in the night——I believe there are no better beds in Europe than I have—I spare no pains to get them, nor money to buy them——His majesty, God bless him, don't sleep upon a better out of his palace; and if I had said in, too, I hope no treason, my lord.

*Lord Ogle.* Your beds are like every thing else about you—incomparable!———They not only make one rest well, but give one spirits, Mr Sterling.

*Ster.* What say you then, my lord, to another walk in the garden? You must see my water by day-light, and my walks, and my slopes, and my clumps, and my bridge, and my flowering trees, and my bed of Dutch tulips—Matters looked but dim last night, my lord. I feel the dew in my great toe—but I would put on a cut shoe, that I might be able to walk you about—I may be laid up to-morrow.

*Lord Ogle.* I pray Heaven you may! [*Aside.*

*Ster.* What say you, my lord?

*Lord Ogle.* I was saying, sir, that I was in hopes of seeing the young ladies at breakfast: Mr Sterling, they are, in my mind, the finest tulips in this part of the world, he, he, he!

*Can.* Bravissimo, my lor! ha, ha, ha!

*Ster.* They shall meet your lordship in the garden—we don't lose our walk for them; I'll take you a little round before breakfast, and a larger before dinner, and in the evening you shall go the grand tour, as I call it, ha, ha, ha!

*Lord Ogle.* Not a foot, I hope, Mr Sterling; consider your gout, my good friend—you'll certainly be laid by the heels for your politeness, he, he, he!

*Can.* Ha, ha, ha! 'tis admirable, en verite! [*Laughing very heartily.*

*Ster.* If my young man [*To* Lov.] here would but laugh at my jokes, which he ought to do, as mounseer does at yours, my lord, we should be all life and mirth.

*Lord Ogle.* What say you, Canton? will you take my kinsman into your tuition? You have certainly the most companionable laugh I ever met with, and never out of tune—

*Can.* But when your lordship is out of spirits.

*Lord Ogle.* Well said, Canton! But here comes my nephew, to play his part.

*Enter* SIR JOHN MELVIL.

Well, sir John, what news from the island of love? Have you been sighing and serenading this morning?

*Sir John.* I am glad to see your lordship in such spirits this morning.

*Lord Ogle.* I'm sorry to see you so dull, sir—What poor things, Mr Sterling, these very young fellows are! they make love with faces, as if they were burying the dead—though, indeed, a marriage sometimes may be properly called a burying of the living—eh, Mr Sterling?

*Ster.* Not if they have enough to live upon, my lord—Ha, ha, ha!

*Can.* Dat is all Monsieur Sterling tink of.

*Sir John.* [*Apart.*] Prithee, Lovewell, come with me into the garden; I have something of consequence for you, and I must communicate it directly.

*Lov.* [*Apart.*] We'll go together——If your lordship and Mr Sterling please, we'll prepare the ladies to attend you in the garden.

[*Exeunt* SIR JOHN *and* LOVEWELL.

*Ster.* My girls are always ready; I make them rise soon, and to bed early; their husbands shall have them with good constitutions, and good fortunes, if they have nothing else, my lord.

*Lord Ogle.* Fine things, Mr Sterling!

*Ster.* Fine things, indeed, my lord!—Ah, my lord, had not you run off your speed in your youth, you had not been so crippled in your age, my lord.

*Lord Ogle.* Very pleasant, he, he, he!——

[*Forcing a laugh.*

*Ster.* Here's mounseer now, I suppose, is pretty near your lordship's standing; but, having little to eat, and little to spend in his own country, he'll wear three of your lordship out—eating and drinking kills us all.

*Lord Ogle.* Very pleasant, I protest!—What a vulgar dog! [*Aside.*

*Can.* My lor so old as me!—He is chicken to me—and look like a boy to pauvre me.

*Ster.* Ha, ha, ha! Well said, mounseer—keep to that, and you'll live in any country of the world——Ha, ha, ha!—But, my lord, I will wait upon you in the garden: we have but a little time to breakfast—I'll go for my hat and cane, fetch a little walk with you, my lord, and then for the hot rolls and butter. [*Exit.*

*Lord Ogle,* I shall attend you with pleasure—Hot rolls and butter in July! I sweat with the thoughts of it—What a strange beast it is!

*Can.* C'est un barbare.

*Lord Ogle.* He is a vulgar dog; and if there

was not so much money in the family, which I can't do without, I would leave him and his hot rolls and butter directly——Come along, monsieur! [*Exeunt* LORD OGLEBY *and* CANTON.

SCENE II.—*Changes to the Garden.*

*Enter* SIR JOHN MELVIL, *and* LOVEWELL.

*Love.* In my room this morning? Impossible!

*Sir John.* Before five this morning, I promise you.

*Love.* On what occasion?

*Sir John.* I was so anxious to disclose my mind to you, that I could not sleep in my bed—but I found that you could not sleep neither—The bird was flown, and the nest long since cold——Where was you, Lovewell?

*Love.* Pooh! prithee! ridiculous!

*Sir John.* Come now, which was it? Miss Sterling's maid? a pretty little rogue! or Miss Fanny's Abigail? a sweet soul too—or—

*Love.* Nay, nay, leave trifling, and tell me your business.

*SirJohn.* Well, but where was you, Lovewell?

*Love.* Walking—writing—what signifies where I was?

*Sir John.* Walking, yes, I dare say. It rained as hard as it could pour. Sweet refreshing showers to walk in! No, no, Lovewell—Now would I give twenty pounds to know which of the maids——

*Love.* But your business! your business, sir John!

*Sir John.* Let me a little into the secrets of the family.

*Love.* Psha!

*Sir John.* Poor Lovewell! he can't bear it, I see. She charged you not to kiss and tell—Eh, Lovewell? However, though you will not honour me with your confidence, I'll venture to trust you with mine——What do you think of Miss Sterling?

*Love.* What do I think of Miss Sterling?

*Sir John.* Ay; what d'ye think of her?

*Love.* An odd question!---but I think her a smart, lively girl, full of mirth and sprightliness.

*Sir John.* All mischief and malice, I doubt.

*Love.* How?

*Sir John.* But her person---what d'ye think of that?

*Love.* Pretty and agreeable.

*Sir John.* A little grisette thing.

*Love.* What is the meaning of all this?

*Sir John.* I'll tell you. You must know, Lovewell, that notwithstanding all appearances—[*Seeing* LORD OGLBY, *&c.*] We are interrupted——When they are gone, I'll explain.

*Enter* LORD OGLEBY, STERLING, MRS HEIDELBERG, MISS STERLING, *and* FANNY.

*Lord Ogle.* Great improvements indeed, Mr Sterling! wonderful improvements! The Four Seasons in lead, the flying Mercury, and the bason with Neptune in the middle, are all in the very extreme of fine taste. You have as many rich figures as the man at Hyde-Park Corner.

*Ster.* The chief pleasure of a country-house is to make improvements, you know, my lord. I spare no expence, not I.——This is quite another guess sort of a place than it was when I first took it, my lord. We were surrounded with trees. I cut down above fifty to make the lawn before the house, and let in the wind and the sun—smack-smooth---as you see.---Then I made a green-house out of the old laundry, and turned the brewhouse into a pinery.---The high octagon summer-house, you see yonder, is raised on the mast of a ship, given me by an East-India captain, who has turned many a thousand of my money. It commands the whole road. All the coaches and chariots, and chaises, pass and repass under your eye. I'll mount you up there in the afternoon, my lord. 'Tis the pleasantest place in the world to take a pipe and a bottle, and so you shall say, my lord.

*Lord Ogle.* Ay, or a bowl of punch, or a can of flip, Mr Sterling! for it looks like a cabin in the air.———If flying chairs were in use, the captain might make a voyage to the Indies in it still, if he had but a fair wind.

*Can.* Ha, ha, ha, ha!

*Mrs Heid.* My brother's a little comical in his ideas, my lord!---But you'll excuse him.---I have a little Gothic dairy, fitted up entirely in my own taste.---In the evening I shall hope for the honour of your lordship's company to take a dish of tea there, or a sullabub warm from the cow.

*Lord Ogle.* I have every moment a fresh opportunity of admiring the elegance of Mrs Heidelberg---the very flower of delicacy, and cream of politeness.

*Mrs Heid.* O, my lord!

[*Leering at* LORD OGLEBY.

*Lord Ogle.* O, madam!

[*Leering at* MRS HEIDELBERG.

*Ster.* How d'ye like these close walks, my lord?

*Lord Ogle.* A most excellent serpentine! It forms a perfect maze, and winds like a true lover's knot.

*Ster.* Ay, here's none of your straight lines here——but all taste—zig-zag—crinkum-crankum---in and out---right and left---to and again---twisting and turning like a worm, my lord!

*Lord Ogle.* Admirably laid out indeed, Mr Sterling! one can hardly see an inch beyond one's nose any where in these walks.------You are a most excellent œconomist of your land, and make a little go a great way.------It lies together in as small parcels as if it was placed in pots out at your window in Grace-church street.

*Can.* Ha, ha, ha, ha!

*Lord Ogle.* What d'ye laugh at, Canton?

*Can.* Ah! que cette similitude est drole! So clever what you say, mi lor!————

*Lord Ogle.* [*To* FANNY.] You seem mightily engaged, madam. What are those pretty hands so busily employed about?

*Fan.* Only making up a nosegay, my lord!—— Will your lordship do me the honour of accepting it? [*Presenting it.*

*Lord Ogle.* I'll wear it next my heart, madam!——I see the young creature dotes on me! [*Apart.*

*Miss Ster.* Lord, sister! you've loaded his lordship with a bunch of flowers as big as the cook or the nurse carry to town, on a Monday morning, for a beau-pot.——Will your lordship give me leave to present you with this rose and sprig of sweet-briar?

*Lord Ogle.* The truest emblems of yourself, madam! all sweetness and poignancy.——A little jealous, poor soul! [*Apart.*

*Ster.* Now, my lord, if you please, I'll carry you to see my ruins.

*Mrs Heid.* You'll absolutely fatigue his lordship with over-walking, brother!

*Lord Ogle.* Not at all, madam! We're in the garden of Eden, you know; in the region of perpetual spring, youth, and beauty.

[*Leering at the women.*

*Mrs Heid.* Quite the man of qualaty, I pertest. [*Apart.*

*Can.* Take a my arm, my lor!

[LORD OGLEBY *leans on him.*

*Ster.* I'll only shew his lordship my ruins, and the cascade, and the Chinese bridge, and then we'll go in to breakfast.

*Lord Ogle.* Ruins, did you say, Mr Sterling?

*Ster.* Ay, ruins, my lord! and they are reckoned very fine ones, too. You would think them ready to tumble on your head. It has just cost me a hundred and fifty pounds to put my ruins in thorough repair. This way, if your lordship pleases.

*Lord Ogle.* [*Going, stops.*] What steeple's that we see yonder?—the parish church, I suppose?

*Ster.* Ha, ha, ha! that's admirable. It is no church at all, my lord! it is a spire that I have built against a tree, a field or two off, to terminate the prospect. One must always have a church, or an obelisk, or something to terminate the prospect, you know. That's a rule in taste, my lord!

*Lord Ogle.* Very ingenious, indeed! For my part, I desire no finer prospect than this I see before me. [*Leering at the women.*]—Simple, yet varied; bounded, yet extensive.—Get away, Canton! [*Pushing away* CANTON.] I want no assistance—I'll walk with the ladies.

*Ster.* This way, my lord!

*Lord Ogle.* Lead on, sir.——We young folks here will follow you.—— Madam!—Miss Sterling!—Miss Fanny! I attend you.

[*Exit after* STERLING, *gallanting the ladies.*

*Can.* [*Following.*] He is cock o' de game, ma foy! [*Exit.*

*Sir John.* At length, thank Heaven, I have an opportunity to unbosom.—I know you are faithful, Lovewell, and flatter myself you would rejoice to serve me.

*Love.* Be assured you may depend upon me.

*Sir John.* You must know, then, notwithstanding all appearances, that this treaty of marriage between Miss Sterling and me will come to nothing.

*Love.* How!

*Sir John.* It will be no match, Lovewell.

*Love.* No match?

*Sir John.* No.

*Love.* You amaze me! What should prevent it?

*Sir John.* I.

*Love.* You! Wherefore?

*Sir John.* I don't like her.

*Love.* Very plain, indeed! I never supposed that you was extremely devoted to her from inclination, but thought you always considered it as a matter of convenience, rather than affection.

*Sir John.* Very true. I came into the family without any impressions on my mind—with an unimpassioned indifference, ready to receive one woman as soon as another. I looked upon love, serious, sober love, as a chimæra, and marriage as a thing of course, as, you know, most people do. But I, who was lately so great an infidel in love, am now one of its sincerest votaries.—In short, my defection from Miss Sterling proceeds from the violence of my attachment to another.

*Love.* Another! So, so! here will be fine work. And, pray, who is she?

*Sir John.* Who is she! who can she be? but Fanny, the tender, amiable, engaging Fanny!

*Love.* Fanny! What Fanny?

*Sir John.* Fanny Sterling. Her sister—Is not she an angel, Lovewell?

*Love.* Her sister? Confusion!—You must not think of it, sir John.

*Sir John.* Not think of it? I can think of nothing else. Nay, tell me, Lovewell, was it possible for me to be indulged in a perpetual intercourse with two such objects as Fanny and her sister, and not find my heart led by insensible attraction towards her?——You seem confounded—Why don't you answer me?

*Love.* Indeed, sir John, this event gives me infinite concern.

*Sir John.* Why so?—Is she not an angel, Lovewell?

*Love.* I foresee, that it must produce the worst consequences. Consider the confusion it must unavoidably create. Let me persuade you to drop these thoughts in time.

*Sir John.* Never—never, Lovewell.

*Love.* You have gone too far to recede. A negociation, so nearly concluded, cannot be broken off with any grace. The lawyers, you know, are hourly expected; the preliminaries almost finally

settled between lord Oglehy and Mr Sterling; and Miss Sterling herself ready to receive you as a husband.

*Sir John.* Why, the banns have been published, and nobody has forbidden them, 'tis true. But, you know, either of the parties may change their minds, even after they enter the church.

*Love.* You think too lightly of this matter. To carry your addresses so far—and then to desert her—and for her sister, too!——It will be such an affront to the family, that they can never put up with it.

*Sir John.* I don't think so; for, as to my transferring my passion from her to her sister, so much the better! for then, you know, I don't carry my affection out of the family.

*Love.* Nay; but, prithee, be serious, and think better of it.

*Sir John.* I have thought better of it already, you see. Tell me honestly, Lovewell? Can you blame me? Is there any comparison between them?

*Love.* As to that now—why, that—is just—— just as it may strike different people. There are many admirers of Miss Sterling's vivacity.

*Sir John.* Vivacity! a medley of Cheapside pertness, and Whitechapel pride.—No, no—if I do go so far into the city for a wedding dinner, it shall be upon turtle at least.

*Love.* But I see no probability of success; for, granting that Mr Sterling would have consented to it at first, he cannot listen to it now. Why did not you break this affair to the family before?

*Sir John.* Under such embarrassed circumstances as I have been, can you wonder at my irresolution or perplexity! nothing but despair, the fear of losing my dear Fanny, could bring me to a declaration even now; and yet, I think I know Mr Sterling so well, that, strange as my proposal may appear, if I can make it advantageous to him as a money transaction, as I am sure I can, he will certainly come into it.

*Love.* But, even suppose he should, which I very much doubt, I don't think Fanny herself would listen to your addresses.

*Sir John.* You are deceived a little in that particular.

*Love.* You'll find I am in the right.

*Sir John.* I have some little reason to think otherwise.

*Love.* You have not declared your passion to her already.

*Sir John.* Yes, I have.

*Love.* Indeed!—And—and—and how did she receive it?

*Sir John.* I think it is not very easy for me to make my addresses to any woman, without receiving some little encouragement.

*Love.* Encouragement! did she give you any encouragement?

*Sir John.* I don't know what you call encouragement—but she blushed—and cried—and desired me not to think of it any more:——Upon which I pressed her hand—kissed it—swore she was an angel—and I could see it tickled her to the soul.

*Love.* And did she express no surprise at your declaration?

*Sir John.* Why, faith, to say the truth, she was a little surprised——and she got away from me, too, before I could thoroughly explain myself. If I should not meet with an opportunity of speaking to her, I must get you to deliver a letter for me.

*Love.* I!—a letter!——I had rather have nothing———

*Sir John.* Nay; you promised me your assistance——and I am sure you cannot scruple to make yourself useful on such an occasion. You may, without suspicion, acquaint her verbally of my determined affection for her, and that I am resolved to ask her father's consent.

*Love.* As to that, I—your commands, you know ——that is, if she——Indeed, sir John, I think you are in the wrong.

*Sir John.* Well—well—that's my concern—— Ha! there she goes, by Heaven! along that walk yonder, d'ye see! I'll go to her immediately.

*Love.* You are too precipitate. Consider what you are doing.

*Sir John.* I would not lose this opportunity for the universe.

*Love.* Nay, pray don't go! Your violence and eagerness may overcome her spirits. The shock will be too much for her. [*Detaining him.*

*Sir John.* Nothing shall prevent me.——Ha! now she turns into another walk———Let me go! [*Breaks from him.*] I shall lose her! [*Going, turns back.*] Be sure, now, to keep out of the way! If you interrupt us, I shall never forgive you. [*Exit hastily.*

*Love.* 'Sdeath! I can't bear this. In love with my wife! acquaint me with his passion for her! make his addresses before my face!——I shall break out before my time.—This was the meaning of Fanny's uneasiness. She could not encourage him—I am sure she could not.——Ha! they are turning into the walk, and coming this way! Shall I leave the place!—Leave him to solicit my wife! I can't submit to it.—They come nearer and nearer—If I stay, it will look suspicious—It may betray us, and incense him—They are here —I must go—I am the most unfortunate fellow in the world! [*Exit.*

*Enter* FANNY *and* SIR JOHN.

*Fan.* Leave me, sir John, I beseech you leave me! nay, why will you persist to follow me with idle solicitations, which are an affront to my character, and an injury to your own honour.

*Sir John.* I know your delicacy, and tremble to offend it: but let the urgency of the occasion be my excuse! Consider, madam, that the future happiness of my life depends on my present ap-

plication to you! consider that this day must determine my fate; and these are, perhaps, the only moments left me to incline you to warrant my passion, and to entreat you not to oppose the proposals I mean to open to your father.

*Fan.* For shame, for shame, sir John! Think of your previous engagements! Think of your own situation, and think of mine! What have you discovered in my conduct, that might encourage you to so bold a declaration? I am shocked that you should venture to say so much, and blush that I should even dare to give it a hearing.——Let me be gone!

*Sir John.* Nay; stay, madam, but one moment——Your sensibility is too great.——Engagements! what engagements have been pretended on either side more than those of family convenience? I went on in the trammels of matrimonial negociation with a blind submission to your father and lord Ogleby; but my heart soon claimed a right to be consulted. It has devoted itself to you, and obliges me to plead earnestly for the same tender interest in yours.

*Fan.* Have a care, sir John! do not mistake a depraved will for a virtuous inclination. By these common pretences of the heart, half our sex are made fools, and a greater part of yours despise them for it.

*Sir John.* Affection, you will allow, is involuntary. We cannot always direct it to the object on which it should fix—But when it is once inviolably attached—inviolably as mine is to you, it often creates reciprocal affection.——When I last urged you on this subject, you heard me with more temper, and, I hoped, with some compassion.

*Fan.* You deceived yourself. If I forbore to exert a proper spirit; nay, if I did not even express the quickest resentment of your behaviour, it was only in consideration of that respect I wish to pay you, in honour to my sister: and, be assured, sir, woman as I am, that my vanity could reap no pleasure from a triumph, that must result from the blackest treachery to her. [*Going.*

*Sir John.* One word, and I have done. [*Stopping her.*] Your impatience and anxiety, and the urgency of the occasion, oblige me to be brief and explicit with you.——I appeal, therefore, from your delicacy to your justice.——Your sister, I verily believe, neither entertains any real affection for me, or tenderness for you. Your father, I am inclined to think, is not much concerned by means of which of his daughters the families are united.—Now, as they cannot, shall not, be connected, otherwise than by my union with you, why will you, from a false delicacy, oppose a measure so conducive to my happiness, and, I hope, your own? I love you, most passionately and sincerely love you——and hope to propose terms agreeable to Mr Sterling:——If, then, you don't absolutely loath, abhor, and scorn me——if there is no other happier man——

*Fan.* Hear me, sir; hear my final determination. Were my father and sister as insensible as you are pleased to represent them; were my heart for ever to remain disengaged to any other, I could not listen to your proposals. What! You, on the very eve of a marriage with my sister; I living under the same roof with her, bound, not only by the laws of friendship and hospitality, but even the ties of blood, to contribute to her happiness, and not to conspire against her peace, the peace of a whole family, and that of my own too!—Away, away, sir John!—At such a time, and in such circumstances, your addresses only inspire me with horror. Nay, you must detain me no longer—I will go.

*Sir John.* Do not leave me in absolute despair! Give me a glimpse of hope!

[*Falling on his knees.*

*Fan.* I cannot. Pray, sir John!

[*Struggling to go.*

*Sir John.* Shall this hand be given to another?—[*Kissing her hand.*]—No; I cannot endure it. My whole soul is yours, and the whole happiness of my life is in your power.

*Enter* MISS STERLING.

*Fan.* Ha! my sister is here. Rise, for shame, sir John!

*Sir John.* Miss Sterling! [*Rising.*

*Miss Ster.* I beg pardon, sir; you'll excuse me, madam! I have broke in upon you a little unopportunely, I believe—but I did not mean to interrupt you—I only came, sir, to let you know that breakfast waits, if you have finished your morning's devotions.

*Sir John.* I am very sensible, Miss Sterling, that this may appear particular, but——

*Miss Ster.* O dear, sir John, don't put yourself to the trouble of an apology—the thing explains itself.

*Sir John.* It will soon, madam. In the mean time, I can only assure you of my profound respect and esteem for you, and make no doubt of convincing Mr Sterling of the honour and integrity of my intentions. And—and—your humble servant, madam!

[*Exit* SIR JOHN *in confusion.*

*Miss Ster.* Respect! Insolence! Esteem! Very fine, truly!—And you, madam! my sweet, delicate, innocent, sentimental sister! Will you convince my papa, too, of the integrity of your intentions?

*Fan.* Do not upbraid me, my dear sister! Indeed, I don't deserve it. Believe me, you cannot be more offended at his behaviour than I am, and I am sure it cannot make you half so miserable.

*Miss Ster.* Make me miserable! You are mightily deceived, madam; it gives me no sort of uneasiness, I assure you. A base fellow! As for you, miss! the pretended softness of your disposition, your artful good-nature, never im-

posed upon me. I always knew you to be sly, and envious, and deceitful.

*Fan.* Indeed, you wrong me.

*Miss Ster.* Oh, you are all goodness, to be sure! Did not I find him on his knees before you? Did not I see him kiss your sweet hand? Did not I hear his protestations? Was not I a witness of your dissembled modesty? No, no, my dear! don't imagine that you can make a fool of your elder sister so easily.

*Fan.* Sir John, I own, is to blame; but I am above the thoughts of doing you the least injury.

*Miss Ster.* We shall try that, madam. I hope, miss, you'll be able to give a better account to my papa and my aunt, for they shall both know of this matter, I promise you. [*Exit* MISS STER.

*Fan.* How unhappy I am! My distresses multiply upon me. Mr Lovewell must now become acquainted with sir John's behaviour to me, and in a manner that may add to his uneasiness. My father, instead of being disposed, by fortunate circumstances, to forgive any transgression, will be previously incensed against me. My sister and my aunt will become irreconcileably my enemies, and rejoice in my disgrace. Yet, in all events, I am determined on a discovery. I dread it, and am resolved to hasten it. It is surrounded with more horrors every instant, as it appears every instant more necessary. [*Exit.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.—*A hall.*

*Enter a Servant, leading in* SERJEANT FLOWER, *and* COUNSELLORS TRAVERSE *and* TRUEMAN, *all booted.*

*Ser.* THIS way, if you please, gentlemen; my master is at breakfast with the family at present, but I'll let him know, and he will wait on you immediately.

*Flow.* Mighty well, young man: mighty well.

*Ser.* Please to favour me with your names, gentlemen.

*Flow.* Let Mr Sterling know, that Mr Serjeant Flower, and two other gentlemen of the bar, are come to wait on him, according to his appointment.

*Ser.* I will, sir. [*Going.*

*Flow.* And hark'e, young man—[*Servant returns.*]—desire my servant—Mr Serjeant Flower's servant, to bring in my green and gold saddle-cloth and pistols, and lay them down here in the hall with my portmanteau.

*Ser.* I will, sir. [*Exit Ser.*

*Flow.* Well, gentlemen! the settling these marriage articles falls conveniently enough, almost just on the eve of the circuits. Let me see—the Home, the Midland, and Western; ay, we can all cross the country well enough to our several destinations. Traverse, when do you begin at Hertford?

*Tra.* The day after to-morrow.

*Flow.* That is commission-day with us at Warwick, too. But my clerk has retainers for every cause in the paper, so it will be time enough if I am there the next morning. Besides, I have about half a dozen cases that have lain by me ever since the spring assizes, and I must tack opinions to them before I see my country clients again; so I will take the evening before me, and then *currente calamo*, as I say—eh, Traverse?

*Tra.* True, Mr Serjeant; and the easiest thing in the world, too; for those country attornies are such ignorant dogs, that in case of the devise of an estate to A, and his heirs for ever, they'll make a query whether he takes in fee or in tail!

*Flow.* Do you expect to have much to do on the Home Circuit these assizes?

*Tra.* Not much *nisi prius* business, but a good deal on the crown side, I believe. The gaols are brim-full, and some of the felons in good circumstances, and likely to be tolerable clients. Let me see! I am engaged for three highway robberies, two murders, one forgery, and half a dozen larcenies, at Kingston.

*Flow.* A pretty decent gaol-delivery!—Do you expect to bring off Darkin, for the robbery on Putney-Common? Can you make out your alibi?

*Tra.* Oh! no! the crown-witnesses are sure to prove our identity. We shall certainly be hanged: but that don't signify. But, Mr Serjeant, have you much to do? Any remarkable cause on the midland this circuit?

*Flow.* Nothing very remarkable——except two rapes, and Rider and Western at Nottingham, for crim. con.——but, on the whole, I believe a good deal of business. Our associate tells me, there are above thirty *venires* for Warwick.

*Tra.* Pray, Mr Serjeant, are you concerned in Jones and Thomas at Lincoln?

*Flow.* I am-----for the plaintiff.

*Tra.* And what do you think on't?

*Flow.* A nonsuit.

*Tra.* I thought so.

*Flow.* Oh, no manner of doubt on't-----*luce clarius*—we have no right in us-----we have but one chance.

*Tra.* What's that?

*Flow.* Why, my Lord Chief does not go the circuit this time, and my brother Puzzle being in the commission, the cause will come on before him.

*True.* Ay, that may do indeed, if you can but throw dust in the eyes of the defendant's counsel.

*Flow.* True. Mr Trueman, I think you are concerned for Lord Ogleby in this affair?

[*To* TRUE.

*True.* I am, sir---I have the honour to be related to his lordship, and hold some courts for him in Somersetshire—go the Western circuit—and attend the sessions at Exeter, merely because his lordship's interests and property lie in that part of the kingdom.

*Flow.* Ha!---and pray, Mr Trueman, how long have you been called to the bar?

*True.* About nine years and three quarters.

*Flow.* Ha!---I don't know that I ever had the pleasure of seeing you before. I wish you success, young gentleman!

*Enter* STERLING.

*Ster.* Oh, Mr Serjeant Flower, I am glad to see you---Your servant, Mr Serjeant! gentlemen, your servant!---Well, are all matters concluded? Has that snail-paced conveyancer, old Ferret, of Gray's-Inn, settled the articles at last? Do you approve of what he has done? Will his tackle hold, tight and strong? Eh, master Serjeant?

*Flow.* My friend Ferret's slow and sure, sir---But then, *serius aut citius*, as we say, sooner or later, Mr Sterling, he is sure to put his business out of hand as he should do. My clerk has brought the writings, and all other instruments, along with him, and the settlement is, I believe, as good a settlement as any settlement on the face of the earth!

*Ster.* But that damned mortgage of 60,000l.---There don't appear to be any other incumbrances, I hope?

*Tra.* I can answer for that, sir---and that will be cleared off immediately on the payment of the first part of Miss Sterling's proportion.-----You agree, on your part, to come down with 80,000l.?

*Ster.* Down on the nail. Ay, ay, my money is ready to-morrow if he pleases—he shall have it in India-bonds, or notes, or how he chooses.—Your lords, and your dukes, and your people at the court end of the town, stick at payments sometimes—debts unpaid, no credit lost with them—but no fear of us substantial fellows—— Eh, Mr Serjeant?

*Flow.* Sir John having last term, according to agreement, levied a fine, and suffered a recovery, has hitherto cut off the entail of the Ogleby estate, for the better effecting the purposes of the present intended marriage; on which above-mentioned Ogleby estate, a jointure of 2000l. per annum is secured to your eldest daughter, now Elizabeth Sterling, spinster; and the whole estate, after the death of the aforesaid earl, descends to the heirs-male of sir John Melvil, on the body of the aforesaid Elizabeth Sterling, lawfully to be begotten.

*Tra.* Very true——and sir John is to be put in immediate possession of as much of his lordship's Somersetshire estate, as lies in the manors of Hogmore and Cranford, amounting to between two and three thousand per annum; and at the death of Mr Sterling, a further sum of seventy thousand——

*Enter* SIR JOHN MELVILL.

*Ster.* Ah, sir John! Here we are—hard at it—paving the road to matrimony—First the lawyers, then comes the doctor—Let us but dispatch the long robe, we shall soon get pudding-sleeves to work, I warrant you.

*Sir John.* I am sorry to interrupt you, sir——but I hope that both you and these gentlemen will excuse me——Having something very particular for your private ear, I took the liberty of following you, and beg you will oblige me with an audience immediately.

*Ster.* Ay, with all my heart!—Gentlemen, Mr Serjeant, you'll excuse it—Business must be done, you know. The writings will keep cold till to-morrow morning.

*Flow.* I must be at Warwick, Mr Sterling, the day after.

*Ster.* Nay, nay, I shan't part with you to-night, gentlemen, I promise you. My house is very full, but I have beds for you all, beds for your servants, and stabling for all your horses. Will you take a turn in the garden, and view some of my improvements, before dinner? Or will you amuse yourselves on the green, with a game of bowls, and a cool tankard? My servants shall attend you. Do you chuse any other refreshment? Call for what you please; do as you please; make yourselves quite at home, I beg of you.—Here, Thomas! Harry! William! wait on these gentlemen! [*Follows the lawyers out, bawling and talking, and then returns to* SIR JOHN.]—And now, sir, I am entirely at your service. What are your commands with me, sir John?

*Sir John.* After having carried the negociation between our families to so great a length; after having assented so readily to all your proposals, as well as received so many instances of your cheerful compliance with the demands made on our part, I am extremely concerned, Mr Sterling, to be the involuntary cause of any uneasiness.

*Ster.* Uneasiness! what uneasiness? Where business is transacted as it ought to be, and the parties understand one another, there can be no uneasiness. You agree, on such and such conditions, to receive my daughter for a wife; on the same conditions, I agree to receive you as a son-in-law; and as to all the rest, it follows of course, you know, as regularly as the payment of a bill after acceptance.

*Sir John.* Pardon me, sir, more uneasiness has arisen than you are aware of. I am myself, at this instant, in a state of inexpressible embarrassment; Miss Sterling, I know, is extremely disconcerted, too; and, unless you will oblige me with the assistance of your friendship, I foresee

the speedy progress of discontent and animosity through the whole family.

*Ster.* What the deuce is all this? I don't understand a single syllable.

*Sir John.* In one word then—it will be absolutely impossible for me to fulfil my engagements in regard to Miss Sterling.

*Ster.* How, sir John! Do you mean to put an affront upon my family? What? refuse to—

*Sir John.* Be assured, sir, that I neither mean to affront, nor forsake your family. My only fear is, that you should desert me; for the whole happiness of my life depends on my being connected with your family, by the nearest and tenderest ties in the world.

*Ster.* Why, did not you tell me, but a moment ago, that it was absolutely impossible for you to marry my daughter?

*Sir John.* True. But you have another daughter, sir—

*Ster.* Well!

*Sir John.* Who has obtained the most absolute dominion over my heart. I have already declared my passion to her; nay, Miss Sterling herself is also apprised of it; and if you will but give a sanction to my present addresses, the uncommon merit of Miss Sterling will, no doubt, recommend her to a person of equal, if not superior, rank to myself, and our families may still be allied by my union with Miss Fanny.

*Ster.* Mighty fine, truly! Why, what the plague do you make of us, sir John? Do you come to market for my daughters, like servants at a statute-fair? Do you think that I will suffer you, or any man in the world, to come into my house, like the grand signior, and throw the handkerchief first to one, and then to t'other, just as he pleases? Do you think I drive a kind of African slave-trade with them? and———

*Sir John.* A moment's patience, sir! Nothing but the excess of my passion for Miss Fanny should have induced me to take any step that had the least appearance of disrespect to any part of your family; and, even now, I am desirous to atone for my transgression, by making the most adequate compensation that lies in my power.

*Ster.* Compensation! what compensation can you possibly make in such a case as this, sir John?

*Sir John.* Come, come, Mr Sterling; I know you to be a man of sense, a man of business, a man of the world. I'll deal frankly with you; and you shall see, that I don't desire a change of measures for my own gratification, without endeavouring to make it advantageous to you.

*Ster.* What advantage can your inconstancy be to me, sir John?

*Sir John.* I'll tell you, sir. You know, that, by the articles at present subsisting between us, on the day of my marriage with Miss Sterling, you agree to pay down the gross sum of eighty thousand pounds.

*Ster.* Well!

*Sir John.* Now if you will but consent to my waving that marriage———

*Ster.* I agree to your waving that marriage! Impossible, sir John!

*Sir John.* I hope not, sir; as, on my part, I will agree to wave my right to thirty thousand pounds of the fortune I was to receive with her.

*Ster.* Thirty thousand, d'ye say?

*Sir John.* Yes, sir; and accept of Miss Fanny with fifty thousand, instead of fourscore.

*Ster.* Fifty thousand——— [*Pausing.*

*Sir John.* Instead of fourscore.

*Ster.* Why—why---there may be something in that.---Let me see---Fanny with fifty thousand, instead of Betsy with fourscore.---But how can this be, sir John? For you know I am to pay this money into the hands of my lord Ogleby, who, I believe, between you and me, sir John, is not overstocked with ready money at present; and threescore thousand of it, you know, is to go to pay off the present incumbrances on the estate, sir John.

*Sir John.* That objection is easily obviated.---Ten of the twenty thousand, which would remain as a surplus of the fourscore, after paying off the mortgage, was intended by his lordship for my use, that we might set off with some little eclat on our marriage, and the other ten for his own. ---Ten thousand pounds, therefore, I shall be able to pay you immediately; and for the remaining twenty thousand, you shall have a mortgage on that part of the estate which is to be made over to me, with whatever security you shall require for the regular payment of the interest, till the principal is duly discharged.

*Ster.* Why---to do you justice, sir John, there is something fair and open in your proposal; and since I find you do not mean to put an affront upon the family——

*Sir John.* Nothing was ever farther from my thoughts, Mr Sterling.---And, after all, the whole affair is nothing extraordinary---such things happen every day; and, as the world has only heard generally of a treaty between the families, when this marriage takes place, nobody will be the wiser, if we have but discretion enough to keep our own counsel.

*Ster.* True, true; and, since you only transfer from one girl to the other, it is no more than transferring so much stock, you know.

*Sir John.* The very thing!

*Ster.* Odso! I had forgot.—We are reckoning without our host here---there is another difficulty———

*Sir John.* You alarm me! What can that be?

*Ster.* I can't stir a step in this business without consulting my sister Heidelberg.—The family has very great expectations from her, and we must not give her any offence.

*Sir John.* But if you come into this measure, surely she will be so kind as to consent——

*Ster.* I don't know that—Betsy is her darling, and I can't tell how far she may resent any slight that seems to be offered to her favourite niece. However, I'll do the best I can for you. You shall go and break the matter to her first; and by that time I may suppose that your rhetoric has prevailed on her to listen to reason, I will step in to reinforce your arguments.

*Sir John.* I'll fly to her immediately; you promise me your assistance?

*Ster.* I do.

*Sir John.* Ten thousand thanks for it! and now, success attend me! [*Going.*

*Ster.* Hark'e, sir John! [SIR JOHN *returns.*] Not a word of the thirty thousand to my sister, sir John?

*Sir John.* Oh, I am dumb, I am dumb, sir. [*Going.*

*Ster.* You'll remember it is thirty thousand?

*Sir John.* To be sure I do.

*Ster.* But, sir John! one thing more. [SIR JOHN *returns.*] My lord must know nothing of this stroke of friendship between us.

*Sir John.* Not for the world. Let me alone! let me alone! [*Offering to go.*

*Ster.* [*Holding him.*] And when every thing is agreed, we must give each other a bond, to be held fast to the bargain.

*Sir John.* To be sure. A bond by all means! bond, or whatever you please.

[*Exit* SIR JOHN *hastily.*

*Ster.* I should have thought of more conditions —he's in a humour to give me every thing—Why, what mere children are your fellows of quality, that cry for a plaything one minute, and throw it by the next! as changeable as the weather, and as uncertain as the stocks! Special fellows to drive a bargain! and yet they are to take care of the interest of the nation truly! Here does this whirligig man of fashion offer to give up thirty thousand pounds in hard money, with as much indifference as if it was a china orange. By this mortgage, I shall have a hold on his *terra firma;* and, if he wants more money, as he certainly will—let him have children by my daughter or no, I shall have his whole estate in a net for the benefit of my family. Well, thus it is, that the children of citizens, who have acquired fortunes, prove persons of fashion; and thus it is, that persons of fashion, who have ruined their fortunes, reduce the next generation to cits.

[*Exit* STER.

SCENE II.—*Changes to another apartment.*

*Enter* MRS HEIDELBERG, *and* MISS STERLING.

*Miss Ster.* This is your gentle-looking, soft-speaking, sweet-smiling, affable Miss Fanny for you!

*Mrs Heid.* My Miss Fanny! I disclaim her. With all her arts she never could insinuate herself into my good graces; and yet she has a way with her, that deceives man, woman, and child, except you and me, niece.

*Miss Ster.* O ay; she wants nothing but a crook in her hand, and a lamb under her arm, to be a perfect picture of innocence and simplicity.

*Mrs Heid.* Just as I was drawn at Amsterdam, when I went over to visit my husband's relations.

*Miss Ster.* And then, she's so mighty good to servants—'pray, John, do this—pray, Tom, do 'that—thank you, Jenny;' and then, so humble to her relations—'to be sure, papa!—as my aunt 'pleases—my sister knows best.'—But, with all her demureness and humility, she has no objection to be lady Melvil, it seems, nor to any wickedness that can make her so.

*Mrs Heid.* She lady Melvil! Compose yourself, niece! I'll ladyship her, indeed: a little creepin, cantin——She shan't be the better for a farden of my money. But tell me, child, how does this intriguing with sir John correspond with her partiality to Lovewell? I don't see a concatunation here.

*Miss Ster.* There I was deceived, madam. I took all their whisperings and stealing into corners to be the mere attraction of vulgar minds; but, behold! their private meetings were not to contrive their own insipid happiness, but to conspire against mine. But I know whence proceeds Mr Lovewell's resentment to me. I could not stoop to be familiar with my father's clerk, and so I have lost his interest.

*Mrs Heid.* My spirit to a T! My dear child! [*Kisses her.*] Mr Heidelberg lost his election for member of Parliament, because I would not demean myself to be slobbered about by drunken shoemakers, beastly cheesemongers, and greasy butchers and tallow-chandlers. However, niece, I can't help diffuring a little in opinion from you in this matter. My experunce and sagacity makes me still suspect, that there is something more between her and that Lovewell, notwithstanding this affair of sir John. I had my eye upon them the whole time of breakfast. Sir John, I observed, looked a little confounded, indeed, though I knew nothing of what had passed in the garden. You seemed to sit upon thorns, too: But Fanny and Mr Lovewell made quite another guess-sort of a figur, and were as perfect a pictur of two distrest lovers, as if it had been drawn by Raphael Angelo. As to sir John and Fanny, I want a matter of fact.

*Miss Ster.* Matter of fact, madam! Did not I come unexpectedly upon them? Was not sir John kneeling at her feet, and kissing her hand? Did not he look all love, and she all confusion? Is not that matter of fact? and did not sir John, the moment that papa was called out of the room to the lawyer-men, get up from breakfast,

and follow him immediately? And I warrant you that, by this time, he has made proposals to him to marry my sister———Oh, that some other person, an earl, or a duke, would make his addresses to me, that I might be revenged on this monster!

*Mrs Heid.* Be cool, child! you shall be lady Melvil, in spite of all their caballins, if it costs me ten thousand pounds to turn the scale. Sir John may apply to my brother, indeed; but I'll make them all know who governs in this fammaly.

*Miss Ster.* As I live, madam, yonder comes sir John! A base man! I can't endure the sight of him. I'll leave the room this instant.

[*Disordered*

*Mrs Heid.* Poor thing! Well, retire to your own chamber, child; I'll give it him, I warrant you; and, by and by, I'll come and let you know all that has past between us.

*Miss Ster.* Pray do, madam. [*Looking back.*] A vile wretch! [*Exit in a rage.*

*Enter* SIR JOHN MELVIL.

*Sir John.* Your most obedient humble servant, madam. [*Bowing very respectfully.*

*Mrs Heid.* Your servant, sir John.

[*Dropping a half curtsey, and pouting.*

*Sir John.* Miss Sterling's manner of quitting the room, on my approach, and the visible coolness of your behaviour to me, madam, convince me that she has acquainted you with what past this morning.

*Mrs Heid.* I am very sorry, sir John, to be made acquainted with any thing that should induce me to change the opinion which I would always wish to entertain of a person of qualaty.

[*Pouting.*

*Sir John.* It has always been my ambition to merit the best opinion from Mrs Heidelberg; and when she comes to weigh all circumstances, I flatter myself———

*Mrs Heid.* You do flatter yourself, if you imagine that I can approve of your behaviour to my niece, sir John. And give me leave to tell you, sir John, that you have been drawn into an action much beneath you, sir John; and that I I look upon every injury offered to Miss Betty Sterling, as an affront to myself, sir John.

[*Warmly.*

*Sir John.* I would not offend you for the world, madam; but when I am influenced by a partiality for another, however ill-founded, I hope your discernment and good sense will think it rather a point of honour to renounce engagements, which I could not fulfil so strictly as I ought; and that you will excuse the change in my inclinations, since the new object, as well as the first, has the honour of being your niece, madam.

*Mrs Heid.* I disclaim her as a niece, sir John; Miss Sterling disclaims her as a sister, and the whole fammaly must disclaim her, for her monstrous baseness and treachery.

*Sir John.* Indeed, she has been guilty of none, madam. Her hand and her heart are, I am sure, entirely at the disposal of yourself and Mr Sterling.

*Enter* STERLING, *behind.*

And if you should not oppose my inclinations, I am sure of Mr Sterling's consent, madam.

*Mrs Heid.* Indeed!

*Sir John.* Quite certain, madam.

*Ster.* [*Behind.*] So! they seem to be coming to terms already. I may venture to make my appearance.

*Mrs Heid.* To marry Fanny?

[STERLING *advances by degrees.*

*Sir John.* Yes, madam.

*Mrs Heid.* My brother has given his consent, you say?

*Sir John.* In the most ample manner, with no other restriction than the failure of your concurrence, madam. [*Sees* STERLING.] Oh, here's Mr Sterling, who will confirm what I have told you.

*Mrs Heid.* What! have you consented to give up your own daughter in this manner, brother?

*Ster.* Give her up! no, not give her up, sister; only in case that you——Zounds, I am afraid you have said too much, sir John.

[*Apart to* SIR JOHN.

*Mrs Heid.* Yes, yes. I see now that it is true enough what my niece told me. You are all plottin and caballin against her. Pray, does lord Ogleby know of this affair?

*Sir John.* I have not yet made him acquainted with it, madam.

*Mrs Heid.* No, I warrant you. I thought so. And so his lordship and myself, truly, are not to be consulted till the last.

*Ster.* What! did not you consult my lord? Oh, fy for shame, sir John!

*Sir John.* Nay, but Mr Sterling——

*Mrs Heid.* We, who are the persons of most consequence and experunce in the two fammalies, are to know nothing of the mattur, 'till the whole is as good as concluded upon. But his lordship, I am sure, will have more generosaty than to countenance such a perceding. And I could not have expected such behaviour from a person of your qualaty, sir John. And, as for you, brother——

*Ster.* Nay, nay, but hear me, sister.

*Mrs Heid.* I am perfectly ashamed of you. Have you no spurrit? no more concern for the honour of our fammaly than to consent———

*Ster.* Consent! I consent! As I hope for mercy, I never gave my consent! Did I consent, sir John?

*Sir John.* Not absolutely, without Mrs Hei-

delberg's concurrence. But, in case of her approbation———

*Ster.* Ay, I grant you, if my sister approved. But that's quite another thing, you know———

[*To* MRS HEIDELBERG.

*Mrs Heid.* Your sister approve, indeed! I thought you knew her better, brother Sterling! What! approve of having your eldest daughter returned upon your hands, and exchanged for the younger! I am surprised how you could listen to such a scandalous proposal.

*Ster.* I tell you, I never did listen to it. Did not I say, that I would be entirely governed by my sister, sir John? And, unless she agreed to your marrying Fanny———

*Mrs Heid.* I agree to his marrying Fanny!—abominable! The man is absolutely out of his senses. Can't that wise head of yours foresee the consequence of all this, brother Sterling?—Will sir John take Fanny without a fortune?—No! After you have settled the largest part of your property on your youngest daughter, can there be an equal portion left for the eldest?—No! Does not this overturn the whole systum of the fammaly? Yes, yes, yes! You know I was always for my niece Betsey's marrying a person of the very first qualaty. That was my maxum: and, therefore, much the largest settlement was, of course, to be made upon her. As for Fanny, if she could, with a fortune of twenty or thirty thousand pounds, get a knight, or a member of parliament, or a rich common council-man for a husband, I thought it might do very well.

*Sir John.* But if a better match should offer itself, why should it not be accepted, madam?

*Mrs Heid.* What! at the expence of her elder sister? O fie, sir John! How could you bear to hear such an indignity, brother Sterling?

*Ster.* I! Nay, I shan't hear of it, I promise you———I can't hear of it, indeed, sir John.

*Mrs Heid.* But you have heard of it, brother Sterling.—You know you have; and sent sir John to propose it to me. But if you can give up your daughter, I shan't forsake my niece, I assure you. Ah! if my poor dear Mr Heidelberg and our sweet babes had been alive, he would not have behaved so.

*Ster.* Did I, sir John?——Nay, speak!——Bring me off, or we are ruined.

[*Apart to* SIR JOHN.

*Sir John.* Why, to be sure, to speak the truth—

*Mrs Heid.* To speak the truth, I'm ashamed of you both. But have a care what you are about, brother! have a care, I say. The counsellors are in the house, I hear; and if every thing is not settled to my liking, I'll have nothing more to say to you, if I live these hundred years. ——I'll go over to Holland, and settle with Mr Vanderspracken, my poor husband's first cousin, and my own fammaly shall never be the better for a farden of my money, I promise you. [*Exit.*

*Ster.* I thought so. I knew she never would agree to it.

*Sir John.* 'Sdeath, how unfortunate! What can we do, Mr Sterling?

*Ster.* Nothing.

*Sir John.* What! must our agreement break off the moment it is made, then?

*Ster.* It can't be helped, sir John. The family, as I told you before, have great expectations from my sister; and if this matter proceeds, you hear yourself, that she threatens to leave us.—My brother Heidelberg was a warm man—a very warm man; and died worth a plumb at least; a plumb! ay, I warrant you, he died worth a plumb and a half.

*Sir John.* Well; but if I———

*Ster.* And then, my sister has three or four very good mortgages, a deal of money in the three per cents, and old South-Sea annuities; besides large concerns in the Dutch and French funds. The greatest part of all this she means to leave to our family.

*Sir John.* I can only say, sir———

*Ster.* Why, your offer of the difference of thirty thousand was very fair and handsome, to be sure, sir John.

*Sir John.* Nay, but I am even willing to———

*Ster.* Ay, but if I was to accept it against her will, I might lose above a hundred thousand; so, you see the balance is against you, sir John.

*Sir John.* But is there no way, do you think, of prevailing on Mrs Heidelberg to grant her consent?

*Ster.* I am afraid not.———However, when her passion is a little abated—for she's very passionate—you may try what can be done: but you must not use my name any more, sir John.

*Sir John.* Suppose I was to prevail on Lord Ogleby to apply to her, do you think that would have any influence over her?

*Ster.* I think he would be more likely to persuade her to it than any other person in the family. She has a great respect for Lord Ogleby. She loves a lord.

*Sir John.* I'll apply to him this very day.—And if he should prevail on Mrs Heidelberg, I may depend on your friendship, Mr Sterling?

*Ster.* Ay, ay; I shall be glad to oblige you, when it is in my power; but, as the account stands now, you see it is not upon the figures. And so, your servant, sir John. [*Exit.*

*Sir John.* What a situation am I in!—Breaking off with her whom I was bound by treaty to marry; rejected by the object of my affections; and embroiled with this turbulent woman, who governs the whole family. And yet opposition, instead of smothering, increases my inclination. I must have her. I'll apply immediately to lord Ogleby; and if he can but bring over the aunt to our party, her influence will overcome the scruples and delicacy of my dear Fanny, and I shall be the happiest of mankind. [*Exit.*

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I. *A Room.*

*Enter* MR STERLING, MRS HEIDELBERG, *and* MISS STERLING.

*Ster.* What! will you send Fanny to town, sister?

*Mrs Heid.* To-morrow evening. I've given orders about it already.

*Ster.* Indeed!

*Mrs Heid.* Posatively.

*Ster.* But consider, sister, at such a time as this, what an odd appearance it will have.

*Mrs Heid.* Not half so odd as her behaviour, brother. This time was intended for happiness, and I'll keep no incendiaries here to destroy it. I insist on her going off to-morrow morning.

*Ster.* I'm afraid this is all your doing, Betsy.

*Miss Ster.* No, indeed, papa. My aunt knows that it is not. For all Fanny's baseness to me, I am sure I would not do or say any thing to hurt her with you or my aunt for the world.

*Mrs Heid.* Hold your tongue, Betsey; I will have my way. When she is packed off, every thing will go on as it should do.———Since they are at their intrigues, I'll let them see that we can act with vigour on our part; and the sending her out of the way, shall be the purliminary step to all the rest of my perceedings.

*Ster.* Well, but sister———

*Mrs Heid.* It does not signify talking, brother Sterling; for I'm resolved to be rid of her, and I will.——Come along, child. [*To* MISS STERLING.] The post-shay shall be at the door by six o'clock in the morning; and if Miss Fanny does not get into it, why, I will—and so there's an end of the matter. [*Bounces out with* MISS STERLING; *then returns.*] One word more, brother Sterling. I expect that you will take your eldest daughter in your hand, and make a formal complaint to Lord Ogleby, of sir John Melvil's behaviour.—Do this, brother;—shew a proper regard for the honour of your fammaly yourself, and I shall throw in my mite to the raising of it. If not——but now you know my mind. So act as you please, and take the consequences.

[*Exit.*

*Ster.* The devil's in the women for tyranny! ——Mothers, wives, mistresses, or sisters, they always will govern us.——As to my sister Heidelberg, she knows the strength of her purse, and domineers upon the credit of it.——'I will do this,' and 'you shall do that,' and 'you shall do t'other,—or else the fammaly sha'n't have a farden of'—[*Mimicking.*]——So absolute with her money!—But, to say the truth, nothing but money can make us absolute; and so we must e'en make the best of her. [*Exit.*

### SCENE II.—*Changes to the Garden.*

*Enter* LORD OGLEBY, *and* CANTON.

*Lord Ogle.* What! Mademoiselle Fanny to be sent away!—Why?—Wherefore?—What's the meaning of all this?

*Can.* Je ne sçais pas—I know nothing of it.

*Lord Ogle.* It can't be—it shan't be:—I protest against the measure. She's a fine girl, and I had much rather that the rest of the family were annihilated, than that she should leave us. ——Her vulgar father, that's the very abstract of 'Change-alley—the aunt, that's always endeavouring to be a fine lady—and the pert sister, for ever shewing that she is one, are horrid company indeed, and, without her, would be intolerable. Ah, la petite Fanchon! she's the thing: Isn't she, Canton?

*Can.* Dere is very good sympatie entre vous and dat young lady, mi lor.

*Lord Ogle.* I'll not be left among these Goths and Vandals, your Sterlings, your Heidelbergs, and Devilbergs——if she goes, I'll positively go, too.

*Can.* In de same post-chay, mi lor? You have no objection to dat, I believe, nor mademoiselle neither, too—ha, ha, ha!

*Lord Ogle.* Prithee, hold thy foolish tongue, Canton. Does thy Swiss stupidity imagine that I can see and talk with a fine girl without desires! My eyes are involuntarily attracted by beautiful objects—I fly as naturally to a fine girl——

*Can.* As de fine girl to you, my lor, ha, ha, ha! You alway fly togedere like un pair de pigeons—

*Lord Ogle.* Like un pair de pigeons—[*Mocks him.*]—Vous etes un sot, Mons. Canton—Thou art always dreaming of my intrigues, and never seest me badiner, but you suspect mischief, you old fool, you.

*Can.* I am fool, I confess, but not always fool in dat, my lor, he, he, he!

*Lord Ogle.* He, he, he! Thou art incorrigible, but thy absurdities amuse one. Thou art like my rappee here,—[*Takes out his box.*]—a most ridiculous superfluity, but a pinch of thee, now and then, is a most delicious treat.

*Can.* You do me great honeur, mi lor.

*Lord Ogle.* 'Tis fact, upon my soul! Thou art properly my cephalic snuff, and art no bad medicine against megrims, vertigoes, and profound thinking—Ha, ha, ha!

*Can.* Your flatterie, my lor, vil make me too prode.

*Lord Ogle.* The girl has some little partiality for me, to be sure: but prithee, Canton, is not that Miss Fanny yonder?

*Can.* [*Looking with a glass.*]—En verité, 'tis

she, my lor---'tis one of de pigeons---de pigeons d'amour!

*Lord Ogle.* Don't be ridiculous, you old monkey. [*Smiling.*

*Can.* I am monkee, I am ole, but I have eye, I have ear, and a little understand, now and den.

*Lord Ogle.* Taisez vous, bête.

*Can.* Elle vous attend, my lor. She vil make a love to you.

*Lord Ogle.* Will she? Have at her, then! A fine girl cannot oblige me more----Egad, I find myself a little enjoué---Come along, Cant! she is but in the next walk---but there is such a deal of this damned crinkum-crankum, as Sterling calls it, that one sees people for half an hour before one can get to them---Allons, Mons. Canton, allons, donc!

[*Exeunt, singing in French.*

SCENE III.—*Another part of the garden.*

*Enter* LOVEWELL *and* FANNY.

*Love.* My dear Fanny, I cannot bear your distress! It overcomes all my resolutions, and I am prepared for the discovery.

*Fan.* But how can it be effected before my departure?

*Love.* I'll tell you. Lord Ogleby seems to entertain a visible partiality for you; and, notwithstanding the peculiarities of his behaviour, I am sure that he is humane at the bottom. He is vain to an excess; but, withal, extremely good-natured, and would do any thing to recommend himself to a lady. Do you open the whole affair of our marriage to him immediately. It will come with more irresistible persuasion from you, than from myself; and I doubt not but you'll gain his friendship and protection at once. His influence and authority will put an end to sir John's solicitations, remove your aunt's and sister's unkindness and suspicions, and, I hope, reconcile your father and the whole family to our marriage.

*Fan.* Heaven grant it! Where is my lord?

*Love.* I have heard him and Canton, since dinner, singing French songs under the great walnut tree, by the parlour-door. If you meet with him in the garden, you may disclose the whole immediately.

*Fan.* Dreadful as the task is, I'll do it. Any thing is better than this continual anxiety.

*Love.* By that time the discovery is made, I will appear to second you. Ha! here comes my lord. Now, my dear Fanny, summon up all your spirits, plead our cause powerfully, and be sure of success. [*Going.*

*Fan.* Ah, don't leave me!

*Love.* Nay, you must let me.

*Fan.* Well, since it must be so, I'll obey you, if I have the power. Oh, Lovewell!

*Love.* Consider, our situation is very critical. To-morrow morning is fixed for your departure, and, if we lose this opportunity, we may wish in vain for another. He approaches---I must retire. Speak, my dear Fanny; speak, and make us happy!

[*Exit* LOVEWELL.

*Fan.* Good Heaven! What a situation am I in! What shall I do? What shall I say to him? I am all confusion.

*Enter* LORD OGLEBY *and* CANTON.

*Lord Ogle.* To see so much beauty so solitary, madam, is a satire upon mankind, and 'tis fortunate that one man has broke in upon your reverie, for the credit of our sex. I say one, madam; for poor Canton here, from age and infirmities, stands for nothing.

*Can.* Noting at all, indeed.

*Fan.* Your lordship does me great honour. I had a favour to request, my lord!

*Lord Ogle.* A favour, madam! To be honoured with your commands, is an inexpressible favour done to me, madam.

*Fan.* If your lordship could indulge me with the honour of a moment's----What is the matter with me? [*Aside.*

*Lord Ogle.* The girl's confused!---he!---here's something in the wind, faith---I'll have a tete-à-tete with her---Allez vous en!

[*To* CANTON.

*Can.* I go---Ah, pauvre Mademoiselle! my lor, have pitie upon the poor pigeone!

*Lord Ogle.* I'll knock you down, Cant. if you're impertinent. [*Smiling.*

*Can.* Den I mus away—[*Shuffles along.*]—You are mosh please, for all dat.

[*Aside, and exit.*

*Fan.* I shall sink with apprehension. [*Aside.*

*Lord Ogle.* What a sweet girl——she's a civilized being, and atones for the barbarism of the rest of the family.

*Fan.* My lord!—I———

[*She curtsies, and blushes.*

*Lord Ogle.* [*Addressing her.*]—I look upon it, madam, to be one of the luckiest circumstances of my life, that I have this moment the honour of receiving your commands, and the satisfaction of confirming, with my tongue, what my eyes perhaps, have but too weakly expressed—that I am literally—the humblest of your servants.

*Fan.* I think myself greatly honoured by your lordship's partiality to me; but it distresses me, that I am obliged, in my present situation, to apply to it for protection.

*Lord Ogle.* I am happy in your distress, madam, because it gives me an opportunity to shew my zeal. Beauty, to me, is a religion in which I was born and bred a bigot, and would die a martyr. I am in tolerable spirits, faith!

[*Aside.*

*Fan.* There is not, perhaps, at this moment, a more distressed creature than myself. Affection,

duty, hope, despair, and a thousand different sentiments, are struggling in my bosom; and even the presence of your lordship, to whom I have flown for protection, adds to my perplexity.

*Lord Ogle.* Does it, madam?—Venus forbid! —My old fault; the devil's in me, I think, for perplexing young women.—[*Aside, and smiling.*] —Take courage, madam! dear Miss Fanny, explain. You have a powerful advocate in my breast, I assure you—My heart, madam—I am attached to you by all the laws of sympathy and delicacy. By my honour, I am!

*Fan.* Then I will venture to unburthen my mind—Sir John Melvil, my lord, by the most misplaced and mistimed declaration of affection for me, has made me the unhappiest of women.

*Lord Ogle.* How, madam! Has sir John made his addresses to you?

*Fan.* He has, my lord, in the strongest terms. But I hope it is needless to say, that my duty to my father, love to my sister, and regard to the whole family, as well as the great respect I entertain for your lordship, [*Curtseying.*] made me shudder at his addresses.

*Lord Ogle.* Charming girl! Proceed, my dear Miss Fanny, proceed!

*Fan.* In a moment——give me leave, my lord! ——But if what I have to disclose should be received with anger or displeasure———

*Lord Ogle.* Impossible, by all the tender powers!—Speak, I beseech you, or I shall divine the cause before you utter it.

*Fan.* Then, my lord, sir John's addresses are not only shocking to me in themselves, but are more particularly disagreeable to me at this time —as—as— [*Hesitating.*

*Lord Ogle.* As what, madam?

*Fan.* As—pardon my confusion—I am entirely devoted to another.

*Lord Ogle.* If this is not plain, the devil's in it——[*Aside.*] But tell me, my dear Miss Fanny, for I must know; tell me the how, the when, and the where———Tell me———

*Enter* CANTON *hastily.*

*Can.* My lor, my lor, my lor!

*Lord Ogle.* Damn your Swiss impertinence! how durst you interrupt me in the most critical melting moment that ever love and beauty honoured me with?

*Can.* I demande pardonne, my lor! Sir John Melvil, my lor, sent me to beg you do him de honeur to speak a little to your lordship.

*Lord Ogle.* I'm not at leisure—I am busy—Get away, you stupid old dog, you Swiss rascal, or I'll———

*Can.* Fort bien, my lor.

[CANTON *goes out on tiptoe.*

*Lord Ogle.* By the laws of gallantry, madam, this interruption should be death: but, as no punishment ought to disturb the triumph of the softer passions, the criminal is pardoned and dismissed. Let us return, madam, to the highest luxury of exalted minds—a declaration of love from the lips of beauty.

*Fan.* The entrance of a third person has a little relieved me, but I cannot go through with it; and yet I must open my heart with a discovery, or it will break with its burthen.

*Lord Ogle.* What passion in her eyes! I am alarmed to agitation! [*Aside.*] I presume, madam, (and as you have flattered me, by making me a party concerned, I hope you'll excuse the presumption) that———

*Fan.* Do you excuse my making you a party concerned, my lord, and let me interest your heart in my behalf, as my future happiness or misery in a great measure depend—

*Lord Ogle.* Upon me, madam?

*Fan.* Upon you, my lord. [*Sighs.*

*Lord Ogle.* There's no standing this. I have caught the infection—her tenderness dissolves me. [*Sighs.*

*Fan.* And should you too severely judge of a rash action which passion prompted, and modesty has long concealed——

*Lord Ogle.* [*Taking her hand.*] Thou amiable creature, command my heart, for it is vanquished! Speak but thy virtuous wishes, and enjoy them.

*Fan.* I cannot, my lord; indeed, I cannot. Mr Lovewell must tell you my distresses; and when you know them, pity and protect me.

[*Exit in tears.*

*Lord Ogle.* How the devil could I bring her to this? It is too much—too much—I can't bear it—I must give way to this amiable weakness. [*Wipes his eyes.*] My heart overflows with sympathy, and I feel every tenderness I have inspired. [*Stifles a tear.*] How blind have I been to the desolation I have made! How could I possibly imagine that a little partial attention and tender civilities to this young creature should have gathered to this burst of passion! Can I be a man, and withstand it? No—I'll sacrifice the whole sex to her. But here comes the father, quite apropos. I'll open the matter immediately, settle the business with him, and take the sweet girl down to Ogleby House to-morrow morning. But what the devil! Miss Sterling, too! What mischief's in the wind now?

*Enter* MR STERLING *and* MISS STERLING.

*Ster.* My lord, your servant! I am attending my daughter here upon rather a disagreeable affair. Speak to his lordship, Betsey.

*Lord Ogle.* Your eyes, Miss Sterling—for I always read the eyes of a young lady—betray some little emotion. What are your commands, madam?

*Miss Ster.* I have but too much cause for my emotion, my lord!

*Lord Ogle.* I cannot commend my kinsman's behaviour, madam. He has behaved like a false

knight, I must confess. I have heard of his apostasy. Miss Fanny has informed me of it.

*Miss Ster.* Miss Fanny's baseness has been the cause of sir John's inconstancy.

*Lord Ogle.* Nay, now, my dear Miss Sterling, your passion transports you too far. Sir John may have entertained a passion for Miss Fanny; but, believe me, my dear Miss Sterling, believe me, Miss Fanny has no passion for sir John. She has a passion, indeed, a most tender passion. She has opened her whole soul to me, and I know where her affections are placed.

[*Conceitedly.*

*Miss Ster.* Not upon Mr Lovewell, my lord; for I have great reason to think that her seeming attachment to him, is, by his consent, made use of as a blind to cover her designs upon sir John.

*Lord Ogle.* Lovewell! No, poor lad! she does not think of him. [*Smiling.*

*Miss Ster.* Have a care, my lord, that both the families are not made the dupes of sir John's artifice, and my sister's dissimulation! You don't know her; indeed, my lord, you don't know her; base, insinuating, perfidious—It is too much—She has been beforehand with me, I perceive. Such unnatural behaviour to me! But since I see I can have no redress, I am resolved that some way or other I will have revenge. [*Exit.*

*Ster.* This is foolish work, my lord!

*Lord Ogle.* I have too much sensibility to bear the tears of beauty.

*Ster.* It is touching, indeed, my lord; and very moving for a father.

*Lord Ogle.* To be sure, sir! You must be distressed beyond measure! Wherefore, to divert your too exquisite feeling, suppose we change the subject, and proceed to business.

*Ster.* With all my heart, my lord.

*Lord Ogle.* You see, Mr Sterling, we can make no union in our families by the proposed marriage.

*Ster.* And I am very sorry to see it, my lord.

*Lord Ogle.* Have you set your heart upon being allied to our house, Mr Sterling?

*Ster.* 'Tis my only wish at present, my omnium, as I may call it.

*Lord Ogle.* Your wishes shall be fulfilled.

*Ster.* Shall they, my lord! but how—how?

*Lord Ogle.* I'll marry in your family.

*Ster.* What! my sister Heidelberg?

*Lord Ogle.* You throw me into a cold sweat, Mr Sterling! No, not your sister; but your daughter.

*Ster.* My daughter!

*Lord Ogle.* Fanny!—Now the murder's out!

*Ster.* What! you, my lord?

*Lord Ogle.* Yes, I; I, Mr Sterling!

*Ster.* No, no, my lord; that's too much.

[*Smiling.*

*Lord Ogle.* Too much! I don't comprehend you.

*Ster.* What, you, my lord, marry my Fanny! Bless me, what will the folks say?

*Lord Ogle.* Why, what will they say!

*Ster.* That you're a bold man, my lord; that's all.

*Lord Ogle.* Mr Sterling, this may be city wit, for aught I know. Do you court my alliance?

*Ster.* To be sure, my lord.

*Lord Ogle.* Then I'll explain—My nephew won't marry your eldest daughter: nor I neither ——Your youngest daughter won't marry him; I will marry your youngest daughter.

*Ster.* What! with a youngest daughter's fortune, my lord?

*Lord Ogle.* With any fortune, or no fortune at all, sir. Love is the idol of my heart, and the demon, Interest, sinks before him. So, sir, as I said before, I will marry your youngest daughter; your youngest daughter will marry me.

*Ster.* Who told you so, my lord?

*Lord Ogle.* Her own sweet self, sir.

*Ster.* Indeed!

*Lord Ogle.* Yes, sir; our affection is mutual; your advantage double and treble; your daughter will be a countess directly—I shall be the happiest of beings; and you'll be father to an earl instead of a baronet.

*Ster.* But what will my sister say? and my daughter?

*Lord Ogle.* I'll manage that matter; nay, if they won't consent, I'll run away with your daughter in spite of you.

*Ster.* Well said, my lord! your spirit's good; I wish you had my constitution! but if you'll venture, I have no objection, if my sister has none.

*Lord Ogle.* I'll answer for your sister, sir—Apropos! the lawyers are in the house. I'll have articles drawn, and the whole affair concluded to-morrow morning.

*Ster.* Very well! and I'll dispatch Lovewell to London immediately for some fresh papers I shall want, and I shall leave you to manage matters with my sister. You must excuse me, my lord, but I can't help laughing at the match—He, he, he! what will the folks say? [*Exit.*

*Lord Ogle.* What a fellow am I going to make a father of? He has no more feeling than the post in his warehouse—But Fanny's virtues tune me to rapture again, and I won't think of the rest of the family.

*Enter* LOVEWELL, *hastily.*

*Love.* I beg your lordship's pardon, my lord: are you alone, my lord?

*Lord Ogle.* No, my lord, I am not alone; I am in company, the best company.

*Love.* My lord!

*Lord Ogle.* I never was in such exquisite enchanting company since my heart first conceived, or my senses tasted pleasure.

*Love.* Where are they, my lord?

[*Looking about.*

*Lord Ogle.* In my mind, sir.

*Love.* What company have you there, my lord? [*Smiling.*

*Lord Ogle.* My own ideas, sir, which so crowd upon my imagination, and kindle in it such a delirium of ecstacy, that wit, wine, music, poetry, all combined, and each perfection, are but mere mortal shadows of my felicity.

*Love.* I see that your lordship is happy, and I rejoice at it.

*Lord Ogle.* You shall rejoice at it, sir; my felicity shall not selfishly be confined, but shall spread its influence to the whole circle of my friends. I need not say, Lovewell, that you shall have your share of it.

*Love.* Shall I, my lord?—Then I understand you; you have heard—Miss Fanny has informed you———

*Lord Ogle.* She has; I have heard, and she shall be happy; 'tis determined.

*Love.* Then I have reached the summit of my wishes. And will your lordship pardon the folly?

*Lord Ogle.* O yes; poor creature, how could she help it? 'Twas unavoidable—Fate and necessity.

*Love.* It was, indeed, my lord. Your kindness distracts me.

*Lord Ogle.* And so did the poor girl, faith!

*Love.* She trembled to disclose the secret, and declare her affections?

*Lord Ogle.* The world, I believe, will not think her affections ill placed.

*Love.* [*Bowing.*] You are too good, my lord. And do you really excuse the rashness of the action?

*Lord Ogle.* From my very soul, Lovewell.

*Love.* Your generosity overpowers me. [*Bowing.*] I was afraid of her meeting with a cold reception.

*Lord Ogle.* More fool you, then.

'Who pleads her cause with never-failing beauty,
'Here finds a full redress.' [*Strikes his breast.*

She's a fine girl, Lovewell.

*Love.* Her beauty, my lord, is her least merit. She has an understanding———

*Lord Ogle.* Her choice convinces me of that.

*Love.* [*Bowing.*] That's your lordship's goodness. Her choice was a disinterested one.

*Lord Ogle.* No, no; not altogether; it began with interest, and ended in passion.

*Love.* Indeed, my lord, if you were acquainted with her goodness of heart, and generosity of mind, as well as you are acquainted with the inferior beauties of her face and person———

*Lord Ogle.* I am so perfectly convinced of their existence, and so totally of your mind, touching every amiable particular of that sweet girl, that, were it not for the cold unfeeling impediments of the law, I would marry her to-morrow morning.

*Love.* My lord!

*Lord Ogle.* I would, by all that's honourable in man, and amiable in woman.

*Love.* Marry her!—What do you mean, my lord!

*Lord Ogle.* Miss Fanny Sterling that is; the countess of Ogleby that shall be.

*Love.* I am astonished!

*Lord Ogle.* Why, could you expect less from me?

*Love.* I did not expect this, my lord.

*Lord Ogle.* Trade and accounts have destroyed your feeling.

*Love.* No, indeed, my lord. [*Sighs.*

*Lord Ogle.* The moment that love and pity entered my breast, I was resolved to plunge into matrimony, and shorten the girl's tortures—I never do any thing by halves; do I, Lovewell?

*Love.* No, indeed, my lord. [*Sighs.*] What an accident!

*Lord Ogle.* What's the matter, Lovewell? thou seem'st to have lost thy faculties! Why don't you wish me joy, man?

*Love.* O, I do, my lord. [*Sighs.*

*Lord Ogle.* She said that you would explain what she had not power to utter; but I wanted no interpreter for the language of love.

*Love.* But has your lordship considered the consequences of your resolution!

*Lord Ogle.* No, sir, I am above consideration, when my desires are kindled.

*Love.* But, consider the consequences, my lord, to your nephew, sir John.

*Lord Ogle.* Sir John has considered no consequences himself, Mr Lovewell.

*Love.* Mr Sterling, my lord, will certainly refuse his daughter to sir John.

*Lord Ogle.* Sir John has already refused Mr Sterling's daughter.

*Love.* But what will become of Miss Sterling, my lord?

*Lord Ogle.* What's that to you?——You may have her, if you will. I depend upon Mr Sterling's city-philosophy, to be reconciled to lord Ogleby's being his son-in-law, instead of sir John Melvil, baronet. Don't you think that your master may be brought to that, without having recourse to his calculations! Eh, Lovewell?

*Love.* But, my lord, that is not the question.

*Lord Ogle.* Whatever is the question, I'll tell you my answer.——I am in love with a fine girl, whom I resolve to marry.

*Enter* SIR JOHN MELVIL.

What news with you, sir John?—You look all hurry and impatience—like a messenger after a battle.

*Sir John.* After a battle, indeed, my lord! I have this day had a severe engagement, and, wanting your lordship as an auxiliary, I have at last mustered up resolution to declare what my duty to you and to myself have demanded from me some time.

*Lord Ogle.* To the business, then, and be as concise as possible, for I am upon the wing—eh, Lovewell? [*He smiles, and* LOVEWELL *bows.*

*Sir John.* I find 'tis in vain, my lord, to struggle against the force of inclination.

*Lord Ogle.* Very true, nephew; I am your witness, and will second the motion——shan't I, Lovewell? [*Smiles, and* LOVEWELL *bows.*

*Sir John.* Your lordship's generosity encourages me to tell you, that I cannot marry Miss Sterling.

*Lord Ogle.* I am not at all surprised at it—she's a bitter potion, that's the truth of it; but as you were to swallow it, and not I, it was your business, and not mine——Any thing more?

*Sir John.* But this, my lord; that I may be permitted to make my addresses to the other sister.

*Lord Ogle.* O yes; by all means——have you any hopes there, nephew?—Do you think he'll succeed, Lovewell?

[*Smiles, and winks at* LOVEWELL.

*Love.* I think not, my lord. [*Gravely.*

*Lord Ogle.* I think so, too; but let the fool try.

*Sir John.* Will your lordship favour me with your good offices to remove the chief obstacle to the match, the repugnance of Mrs Heidelberg?

*Lord Ogle.* Mrs Heidelberg! Had not you better begin with the young lady first? It will save you a great deal of trouble: won't it, Lovewell? [*Smiles.*] But do what you please, it will be the same thing to me: won't it, Lovewell? [*Conceitedly.*] Why don't you laugh at him?

*Love.* I do, my lord. [*Forces a smile.*

*Sir John.* And your lordship will endeavour to prevail on Mrs Heidelberg to consent to my marriage with Miss Fanny?

*Lord Ogle.* I'll speak to Mrs Heidelberg about the adorable Fanny as soon as possible.

*Sir John.* Your generosity transports me!

*Lord Ogle.* Poor fellow, what a dupe! he little thinks who's in possession of the town.

[*Aside.*

*Sir John.* And your lordship is not in the least offended at this seeming inconstancy?

*Lord Ogle.* Not in the least. Miss Fanny's charms will even excuse infidelity. I look upon women as the *feræ naturæ*—lawful game—and every man who is qualified, has a natural right to pursue them;—Lovewell as well as you, and I as well as either of you. Every man shall do his best, without offence to any——what say you, kinsmen?

*Sir John.* You have made me happy, my lord.

*Love.* And me, I assure you, my lord!

*Lord Ogle.* And I am superlatively so—*allons donc!* to horse and away, boys!—you to your affairs, and I to mine——*suivons l'amour.* [*Sings.*

[*Exeunt severally.*

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—FANNY'S *apartment.*

*Enter* LOVEWELL *and* FANNY, *followed by* BETTY.

*Fan.* WHY did you come so soon, Mr Lovewell? the family is not yet in bed, and Betty certainly heard somebody listening near the chamber-door.

*Bet.* My mistress is right, sir! evil spirits are abroad; and I am sure you are both too good, not to expect mischief from them.

*Love.* But who can be so curious, or so wicked?

*Bet.* I think we have wickedness and curiosity enough in this family, sir, to expect the worst.

*Fan.* I do expect the worst.——Prithee, Betty, return to the outward door, and listen if you hear any body in the gallery; and let us know directly.

*Bet.* I warrant you, madam—the lord bless you both! [*Exit* BET.

*Fan.* What did my father want with you this evening?

*Love.* He gave me the key of his closet, with orders to bring from London some papers relating to lord Ogleby.

*Fan.* And why did you not obey him?

*Love.* Because I am certain that his lordship has opened his heart to him about you, and those papers are wanted merely on that account—but as we shall discover all to-morrow, there will be no occasion for them, and it would be idle in me to go.

*Fan.* Hark!—hark! bless me, how I tremble!——I feel the terrors of guilt——indeed, Mr Lovewell, this is too much for me.

*Love.* And for me, too, my sweet Fanny! Your apprehensions make a coward of me. But what can alarm you? your aunt and sister are in their chambers, and you have nothing to fear from the rest of the family.

*Fan.* I fear every body, and every thing, and every moment——My mind is in continual agitation and dread; indeed, Mr Lovewell, this situation may have very unhappy consequences.

[*Weeps.*

*Love.* But it shan't——I would rather tell our story this moment to all the house, and run the risk of maintaining you by the hardest labour, than suffer you to remain in this dangerous perplexity.—What! shall I sacrifice all my best hopes and affections, in your dear health and safety, for the mean, and, in such case, the meanest consideration—of your fortune!—Were we to be abandoned by all our relations, we have that in our hearts and minds will weigh against the most affluent circumstances. I should not have proposed the secrecy of our marriage, but

for your sake; and with hopes that the most generous sacrifice you have made to love and me, might be less injurious to you, by waiting a lucky moment of reconciliation.

*Fan.* Hush! hush! for Heaven's sake, my dear Lovewell, don't be so warm! your generosity gets the better of your prudence; you will be heard, and we shall be discovered.——I am satisfied—indeed I am———Excuse this weakness, this delicacy, this what you will.——My mind's at peace—indeed it is—think no more of it, if you love me!

*Love.* That one word has charmed me, as it always does, to the most implicit obedience: it would be the worst of ingratitude in me to distress you a moment. [*Kisses her.*

*Re-enter* BETTY.

*Bet.* [*In a low voice.*] I'm sorry to disturb you.

*Fan.* Ha! what's the matter?

*Love.* Have you heard any body?

*Bet.* Yes, yes, I have; and they have heard you, too, or I'm mistaken—if they had seen you, too, we should have been in a fine quandary!

*Fan.* Prithee, don't prate now, Betty!

*Love.* What did you hear?

*Bet.* I was preparing myself, as usual, to take me a little nap———

*Love.* A nap!

*Bet.* Yes, sir, a nap; for I watch much better so than wide awake; and, when I had wrapped this handkerchief round my head, for fear of the ear-ach from the key-hole, I thought I heard a kind of a sort of a buzzing, which I first took for a gnat, and shook my head two or three times, and went so with my hand.

*Fan.* Well—well—and so———

*Bet.* And so, madam, when I heard Mr Lovewell a little loud, I heard the buzzing louder, too——and pulling off my handkerchief softly, I could hear this sort of noise———

[*Makes an indistinct sort of noise, like speaking.*

*Fan.* Well, and what did they say?

*Bet.* O! I could not understand a word of what was said.

*Love.* The outward door is locked?

*Bet.* Yes; and I bolted it, too, for fear of the worst.

*Fan.* Why did you? they must have heard you, if they were near.

*Bet.* And I did it on purpose, madam, and coughed a little, too, that they might not hear Mr Lovewell's voice—when I was silent, they were silent, and so I came to tell you.

*Fan.* What shall we do?

*Love.* Fear nothing; we know the worst; it will only bring on our catastrophe a little too soon—but Betty might fancy this noise—she's in the conspiracy, and can make a man a mouse at any time.

*Bet.* I can distinguish a man from a mouse as well as my betters—I'm sorry you think so ill of me, sir.

*Fan.* He compliments you; don't be a fool!—Now you have set her tongue a running, she'll mutter for an hour. [*To* LOVEWELL.] I'll go and hearken myself. [*Exit* FAN.

*Bet.* I'll turn my back upon no girl for sincerity and service. [*Half aside, and muttering.*

*Love.* Thou art the first in the world for both; and I will reward you soon, Betty, for one and the other.

*Bet.* I am not mercenary, neither—I can live on a little, with a good carreter.

*Re-enter* FANNY.

*Fan.* All seems quiet—suppose, my dear, you go to your own room—I shall be much easier then—and to-morrow we will be prepared for the discovery.

*Bet.* You may discover, if you please; but, for my part, I shall still be secret.

[*Half aside, and muttering.*

*Love.* Should I leave you now, if they still are upon the watch, we shall lose the advantage of our delay. Besides, we should consult upon to-morrow's business. Let Betty go to her own room, and lock the outward door after her; we can fasten this; and when she thinks all safe, she may return and let me out as usual.

*Bet.* Shall I, madam?

*Fan.* Do! let me have my way to-night, and you shall command me ever after. I would not have you surprised here for the world. Pray, leave me! I shall be quite myself again, if you will oblige me.

*Love.* I live only to oblige you, my sweet Fanny! I'll be gone this moment. [*Going.*

*Fan.* Let us listen first at the door, that you may not be intercepted. Betty shall go first, and, if they lay hold of her———

*Bet.* They'll have the wrong sow by the ear, I can tell them that. [*Going hastily.*

*Fan.* Softly—softly—Betty! don't venture out, if you hear a noise. Softly, I beg of you! see, Mr Lovewell, the effects of indiscretion!

*Love.* But love, Fanny, makes amends for all.

[*Exeunt all, softly.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to a gallery, which leads to several bed-chambers.*

*Enter* MISS STERLING, *leading* MRS HEIDELBERG *in a night-cap.*

*Miss Ster.* This way, dear madam; and then I'll tell you all.

*Mrs Heid.* Nay, but niece—consider a little ——don't drag me out this figure; let me put on my fly-cap!—if any of my lord's fammaly, or the counsellors at law, should be stirring, I should be perdigus disconcerted.

*Miss Ster.* But, my dear madam, a moment is an age, in my situation. I am sure my sister has been plotting my disgrace and ruin in that chamber——O! she's all craft and wickedness.

*Mrs Heid.* Well, but softly, Betsey!—you are all in emotion—your mind is too much flustrated—you can neither eat, nor drink, nor take your natural rest—compose yourself, child; if we are not as warysome as they are wicked, we shall disgrace ourselves and the whole fammaly.

*Miss Ster.* We are disgraced already, madam. Sir John Melvil has forsaken me; my lord cares for nobody but himself; or, if any body, it is my sister; my father, for the sake of a better bargain, would marry me to a 'Change broker; so that if you, madam, don't continue my friend—if you forsake me—if I am to lose my best hopes and consolation—in your tenderness—and affections—I had better—at once—give up the matter—and let my sister enjoy—the fruits of her treachery—trample with scorn upon the rights of her elder sister, the will of the best of aunts and the weakness of a too interested father.

[*She pretends to be bursting into tears all this speech.*

*Mrs Heid.* Don't, Betsey—keep up your spurrit—I hate whimpering—I am your friend—depend upon me in every particular—but be composed, and tell me what new mischief you have discovered?

*Miss Ster.* I had no desire to sleep, and would not undress myself, knowing that my Machiavel sister would not rest till she had broke my heart:—I was so uneasy that I could not stay in my room; but, when I thought that all the house was quiet, I sent my maid to discover what was going forward; she immediately came back, and told me that they were in high consultation; that she had heard only, for it was in the dark, my sister's maid conduct sir John Melvil to her mistress, and then lock the door.

*Mrs Heid.* And how did you conduct yourself in this dalimma?

*Miss Ster.* I returned with her, and could hear a man's voice, though nothing that they said, distinctly; and you may depend upon it, that sir John is now in that room, that they have settled the matter, and will run away together before morning, if we don't prevent them.

*Mrs Heid.* Why, the brazen slut! she has got her sister's husband (that is to be) locked up in her chamber! at night, too!—I tremble at the thoughts!

*Miss Ster.* Hush, madam! I hear something.

*Mrs Heid.* You frighten me—let me put on my fly-cap——I would not be seen in this figur for the world.

*Miss Ster.* 'Tis dark, madam; you can't be seen.

*Mrs Heid.* I protest there's a candle coming, and a man, too!

*Miss Ster.* Nothing but servants; let us retire a moment! [*They retire.*

*Enter* BRUSH, *half drunk, laying hold of the Chamber-maid, who has a candle in her hand.*

*Cham.* Be quiet, Mr Brush; I shall drop down with terror!

*Brush.* But my sweet, and most amiable chambermaid, if you have no love, you may hearken to a little reason; that cannot possibly do your virtue any harm.

*Cham.* But you may do me harm, Mr Brush, and a great deal of harm, too; pray let me go; I am ruined if they hear you; I tremble like an asp.

*Brush.* But they shan't hear us; and if you have a mind to be ruined, it shall be the making of your fortune, you little slut, you! therefore, I say it again, if you have no love, hear a little reason!

*Cham.* I wonder at your impurence, Mr Brush, to use me in this manner; this is not the way to keep me company, I assure you. You are a town-rake, I see; and now you are a little in liquor, you fear nothing.

*Brush.* Nothing, by Heavens, but your frowns, most amiable chamber-maid! I am a little electrified, that's the truth on't; I am not used to drink port, and your master's is so heady, that a pint of it oversets a claret-drinker.

*Cham.* Don't be rude! bless me!—I shall be ruined—what will become of me?

*Brush.* I'll take care of you, by all that's honourable!

*Cham.* You are a base man to use me so—I'll cry out, if you don't let me go. That is Miss Sterling's chamber, that Miss Fanny's, and that Madam Heidelberg's.

*Brush.* And that my lord Ogleby's, and that my lady What-d'ye-call-'em's: I don't mind such folks when I'm sober, much less when I am whimsical—rather above that, too.

*Cham.* More shame for you, Mr Brush!—you terrify me—you have no modesty.

*Brush.* O, but I have, my sweet spider-brusher!—for instance; I reverence Miss Fanny—she's a most delicious morsel, and fit for a prince.——With all my horrors of matrimony, I could marry her myself—but for her sister——

*Miss Ster.* There, there, madam, all in a story!

*Cham.* Bless me, Mr Brush!—I heard something!

*Brush.* Rats, I suppose, that are gnawing the old timbers of this execrable old dungeon—If it was mine, I would pull it down, and fill your fine canal up with the rubbish; and then I should get rid of two damned things at once.

*Cham.* Law! law! how you blaspheme!—we shall have the house upon our heads for it.

*Brush.* No, no; it will last our time—but, as I was saying, the eldest sister—Miss Jezebel——

*Cham.* Is a fine young lady, for all your evil tongue.

*Brush.* No——we have smoaked her already; and unless she marries our old Swiss, she can have none of us——no, no, she won't do—we are a little too nice.

*Cham.* You're a monstrous rake, Mr Brush, and don't care what you say.

*Brush.* Why, for that matter, my dear, I am a little inclined to mischief; and if you don't have pity upon me, I will break open that door, and ravish Mrs Heidelberg.

*Mrs Heid.* [*Coming forward.*] There's no bearing this—you profligate monster!

*Cham.* Ha! I am undone!

*Brush.* Zounds! here she is, by all that's monstrous! [*Runs off.*

*Miss Ster.* A fine discourse you have had with that fellow!

*Mrs Heid.* And a fine time of night it is to be here with that drunken monster!

*Miss Ster.* What have you to say for yourself?

*Cham.* I can say nothing.—I'm so frightened, and so ashamed—but indeed I am vartuous—I am vartuous, indeed.

*Mrs Heid.* Well, well——don't tremble so; but, tell us what you know of this horrable plot, here.

*Miss Ster.* We'll forgive you, if you'll discover all.

*Cham.* Why, madam—don't let me betray my fellow servants——I shan't sleep in my bed, if I do.

*Mrs Heid.* Then you shall sleep somewhere else to-morrow night.

*Cham.* O dear! what shall I do!

*Mrs Heid.* Tell us this moment, or I'll turn you out of doors directly.

*Cham.* Why, our butler has been treating us below in his pantry———Mr Brush forced us to make a kind of a holiday night of it.

*Miss Ster.* Holiday! for what?

*Cham.* Nay, I only made one.

*Miss Ster.* Well, well; but upon what account?

*Cham.* Because, as how, madam, there was a change in the family, they said——that his honour, sir John, was to marry Miss Fanny, instead of your ladyship.

*Miss Ster.* And so you make a holiday for that?—Very fine!

*Cham.* I did not make it, madam.

*Mrs Heid.* But do you know nothing of sir John's being to run away with Miss Fanny to-night?

*Cham.* No, indeed, madam.

*Miss Ster.* Nor of his being now locked up in my sister's chamber?

*Cham.* No, as I hope for marcy, madam.

*Mrs Heid.* Well, I'll put an end to all this directly——do you run to my brother Sterling——

*Cham.* Now, madam!—'Tis so very late, madam——

*Mrs Heid.* I don't care how late it is. Tell him there are thieves in the house——that the house is on fire——tell him to come here immediately——go, I say!

*Cham.* I will, I will, though I'm frightened out of my wits. [*Exit.*

*Mrs Heid.* Do you watch here, my dear; and I'll put myself in order, to face them. We'll plot them, and counter-plot them, too.

[*Exit into her chamber.*

*Miss Ster.* I have as much pleasure in this revenge, as in being made a countess.—Ha! they are unlocking the door.———Now for it!

[*Retires.*

FANNY'S *door is unlocked, and* BETTY *comes out with a candle.* MISS STERLING *approaches her.*

*Betty.* [*Calling within.*] Sir, sir! now's your time—all's clear. [*Seeing* MISS STERLING.]——Stay, stay—not yet—we are watched.

*Miss Ster.* And so you are, madam Betty.

[MISS STERLING *lays hold of her, while* BETTY *locks the door, and puts the key into her pocket.*]

*Bet.* [*Turning round.*] What's the matter, madam?

*Miss Ster.* Nay, that you shall tell my father and aunt, madam.

*Bet.* I am no tell-tale, madam, and no thief; they'll get nothing from me.

*Miss Ster.* You have a great deal of courage, Betty; and, considering the secrets you have to keep, you have occasion for it.

*Bet.* My mistress shall never repent her good opinion of me, ma'am.

*Enter* MR STERLING.

*Ster.* What's all this? What's the matter? Why am I disturbed in this manner?

*Miss Ster.* This creature, and my distresses, sir, will explain the matter.

*Re-enter* MRS HEIDELBERG, *with another head-dress.*

*Mrs Heid.* Now I'm prepared for the rancounter. Well, brother, have you heard of this scene of wickedness?

*Ster.* Not I—but what is it? Speak. I was got into my little closet, all the lawyers were in bed, and I had almost lost my senses in the confusion of lord Ogleby's mortgages, when I was alarmed with a foolish girl, who could hardly speak; and whether it's fire, or thieves, or murder, or a rape, I'm quite in the dark.

*Mrs Heid.* No, no; there's no rape, brother! all parties are willing, I believe.

*Miss Ster.* Who's in that chamber?

[*Detaining* BETTY, *who seemed to be stealing away.*]

*Bet.* My mistress.

*Miss Ster.* And who's with your mistress?

*Bet.* Why, who should there be?

*Miss Ster.* Open the door, then, and let us see.

*Bet.* The door is open, madam. [MISS STERLING *goes to the door.*] I'll sooner die than peach. [*Exit hastily.*

*Miss Ster.* The door is locked; and she has got the key in her pocket.

*Mrs Heid.* There's impudence, brother! piping hot from your daughter Fanny's school!

*Ster.* But zounds! what is all this about? You tell me of a sum total, and you don't produce the particulars.

*Mrs Heid.* Sir John Melvil is lock up in your daughter's bed-chamber——There is the particulars.

*Ster.* The devil he is! That's bad.

*Miss Ster.* And he has been there some time, too.

*Ster.* Ditto!

*Mrs Heid.* Ditto! worse and worse, I say.—I'll raise the house, and expose him to my lord, and the whole fammaly.

*Ster.* By no means! we shall expose ourselves, sister! the best way is to insure privately—let me alone! I'll make him marry her tomorrow morning.

*Miss Ster.* Make him marry her! this is beyond all patience! You have thrown away all your affection; and I shall do as much by my obedience; unnatural fathers make unnatural children. My revenge is in my own power, and I'll indulge it. Had they made their escape, I should have been exposed to the derision of the world: but the deriders shall be derided; and so—help! help, there! thieves! thieves!

*Mrs Heid.* Tit-for-tat, Betsey! you are right, my girl.

*Ster.* Zounds! you'll spoil all—you'll raise the whole family—the devil's in the girl!

*Mrs Heid.* No, no; the devil's in you, brother; I am ashamed of your principles. What! would you connive at your daughter's being locked up with her sister's husband? Help! thieves! thieves, I say! [*Cries out.*

*Ster.* Sister, I beg you! daughter, I command you! If you have no regard for me, consider yourselves! we shall lose this opportunity of ennobling our blood, and getting above twenty *per cent.* for our money.

*Miss Ster.* What, by my disgrace and my sister's triumph! I have a spirit above such mean considerations; and to shew you, that it is not a low-bred, vulgar 'Change-alley spirit——help! help! thieves! thieves! thieves, I say!

*Ster.* Ay, ay, you may save your lungs—the house is in an uproar: women, at best, have no discretion; but, in a passion, they'll fire a house, or burn themselves in it, rather than not be revenged.

*Enter* CANTON, *in a night-gown and slippers.*

*Can.* Eh, diable! vat is de raison of dis great noise, dis tantamarre?

*Ster.* Ask those ladies, sir; 'tis of their making.

*Lord Ogle.* [*Calls within.*] Brush! Brush!—Canton! where are you? What's the matter?—[*Rings a bell.*] Where are you?

*Ster.* 'Tis my lord calls, Mr Canton.

*Can.* I com, mi lor!——

[*Exit* CANTON.

[LORD OGLEBY *still rings.*

*Serj. Flow.* [*Calls within.*] A light! a light, here! where are the servants? Bring a light for me and my brothers.

*Ster.* Lights here! lights for the gentlemen!

[*Exit* STERLING.

*Mrs Heid.* My brother feels, I see—your sister's turn will come next.

*Miss Ster.* Ay, ay, let it go round, madam; it is the only comfort I have left.

*Re-enter* STERLING, *with lights, before Serjeant* FLOWER, *with one boot and a slipper, and* TRAVERSE.

*Ster.* This way, sir! this way, gentlemen!

*Flow.* Well; but Mr Sterling, no danger, I hope. Have they made a burglarious entry?—Are you prepared to repulse them? I am very much alarmed about thieves at circuit-time.—They would be particularly severe with us gentlemen of the bar.

*Tra.* No danger, Mr Sterling? no trespass, I hope?

*Ster.* None, gentlemen, but of those ladies making.

*Mrs Heid.* You'll be ashamed to know, gentlemen, that all your labours and studies about this young lady are thrown away—Sir John Melvil is, at this moment, locked up with this lady's younger sister.

*Flow.* The thing is a little extraordinary, to be sure; but, why were we to be frightened out of our beds for this? Could not we have tried this cause to-morrow morning?

*Miss Ster.* But, sir, by to-morrow morning, perhaps, even your assistance would not have been of any service—the birds, now in that cage, would have flown away.

*Enter* LORD OGLEBY, *in his robe-de-chambre, night-cap, &c. leaning on* CANTON.

*Lord Ogle.* I had rather lose a limb than my night's rest. What's the matter with you all?

*Ster.* Ay, ay, 'tis all over! Here's my lord too!

*Lord Ogle.* What's all this shrieking and screaming? Where's my angelic Fanny? She's safe, I hope?

*Mrs Heid.* Your angelic Fanny, my lord, is locked up with your angelic nephew in that chamber.

*Lord Ogle.* My nephew! then will I be excommunicated.

*Mrs Heid.* Your nephew, my lord, has been plotting to run away with the younger sister; and the younger sister has been plotting to run away with your nephew: and if we had not watched them, and called up the fammaly, they had been upon the scamper to Scotland by this time.

*Lord Ogle.* Look'e, ladies! I know that sir John has conceived a violent passion for Miss Fanny; and I know, too, that Miss Fanny has conceived a violent passion for another person; and I am so well convinced of the rectitude of her affections, that I will support them with my fortune, my honour, and my life. Eh, shan't I, Mr Sterling? [*Smiling.*] What say you?

*Ster.* [*Sulkily.*] To be sure, my lord. These bawling women have been the ruin of every thing. [*Aside.*

*Lord Ogle.* But come, I'll end this business in a trice—if you, ladies, will compose yourselves, and Mr Sterling will insure Miss Fanny from violence, I will engage to draw her from her pillow with a whisper through the key-hole.

*Mrs Heid.* The horrid creatures! I say, my lord, break the door open.

*Lord Ogle.* Let me beg of your delicacy not to be too precipitate. Now to our experiment! [*Advancing towards the door.*

*Miss Ster.* Now, what will they do? my heart will beat through my bosom.

*Enter* BETTY, *with the key.*

*Bet.* There's no occasion for breaking open doors, my lord; we have done nothing that we ought to be ashamed of, and my mistress shall face her enemies. [*Going to unlock the door.*

*Mrs Heid.* There's impudence!

*Lord Ogle.* The mystery thickens. Lady of the bed-chamber, [*To* BETTY.] open the door, and entreat sir John Melvil (for the ladies will have it that he is there) to appear and answer to high crimes and misdemeanors.—Call sir John Melvil into the court!

*Enter* SIR JOHN MELVIL, *on the other side.*

*Sir John.* I am here, my lord.

*Mrs Heid.* Hey-day!

*Miss Ster.* Astonishment!

*Sir John.* What's all this alarm and confusion? there is nothing but hurry in the house; what is the reason of it?

*Lord Ogle.* Because you have been in that chamber; have been! nay, you are there at this moment, as these ladies have protested, so don't deny it———

*Tra.* This is the clearest alibi I ever knew, Mr Serjeant.

Flow. *Luce clarius.*

*Lord Ogle.* Upon my word, ladies, if you have often these frolicks, it would be really entertaining to pass a whole summer with you. But come, [*To* BETTY.] open the door, and entreat your amiable mistress to come forth, and dispel all our doubts with her smiles.

*Bet.* [*Opening the door.*] Madam, you are wanted in this room. [*Pertly.*

*Enter* FANNY, *in great confusion.*

*Miss Ster.* You see she's ready dressed—and what confusion she's in!

*Mrs Heid.* Ready to pack off, bag and baggage! her guilt confounds her!

*Flow.* Silence in the court, ladies!

*Fan.* I am confounded, indeed, madam!

*Lord Ogle.* Don't droop, my beauteous lily! but, with your own peculiar modesty, declare your state of mind.—Pour conviction into their ears, and raptures into mine. [*Smiling.*

*Fan.* I am, at this moment, the most unhappy—most distressed—the tumult is too much for my heart—and I want the power to reveal a secret, which, to conceal, has been the misfortune and misery of my— [*Faints away.*

*Lord Ogle.* She faints! help, help! for the fairest and best of women!

*Bet.* [*Running to her.*] O, my dear mistress—help, help, there!——

*Sir John.* Ha! let me fly to her assistance.

LOVEWELL *rushes out of the chamber.*

*Love.* My Fanny in danger! I can contain no longer.—Prudence were now a crime; all other cares were lost in this!—speak, speak, speak to me, my dearest Fanny!—let me but hear thy voice! open your eyes, and bless me with the smallest sign of life!

[*During this speech, they are all in amazement.*]

*Miss Ster.* Lovewell!——I am easy.

*Mrs Heid.* I am thunderstruck!

*Lord Ogle.* I am petrified!

*Sir John.* And I undone!

*Fan.* [*Recovering.*] O, Lovewell!—even supported by thee, I dare not look my father, nor his lordship, in the face.

*Ster.* What now! did not I send you to London, sir?

*Lord Ogle.* Eh!—What! How's this? by what right and title have you been half the night in that lady's bed-chamber?

*Love.* By that right, which makes me the happiest of men! and, by a title, which I would not forego, for any the best of kings could give.

*Bet.* I could cry my eyes out to hear his magnimity.

*Lord Ogle.* I am annihilated!

*Ster.* I have been choked with rage and wonder; but now I can speak.—Zounds! what have

you to say to me? Lovewell, you are a villain.—You have broke your word with me.

*Fan.* Indeed, sir, he has not—you forbade him to think of me, when it was out of his power to obey you; we have been married these four months.

*Ster.* And he shan't stay in my house four hours. What baseness and treachery! As for you, you shall repent this step as long as you live, madam.

*Fan.* Indeed, sir, it is impossible to conceive the tortures I have already endured in consequence of my disobedience. My heart has continually upbraided me for it; and, though I was too weak to struggle with affection, I feel that I must be miserable for ever, without your forgiveness.

*Ster.* Lovewell, you shall leave my house directly; and you shall follow him, madam.

*Lord Ogle.* And if they do, I will receive them into mine. Look ye, Mr Sterling; there have been some mistakes, which we had all better forget, for our own sakes; and the best way to forget them, is to forgive the cause of them; which I do, from my soul.—Poor girl! I swore to support her affection with my life and fortune;—'tis a debt of honour, and must be paid—you swore as much, too, Mr Sterling; but your laws in the city will excuse you, I suppose; for you never strike a balance without errors excepted.

*Ster.* I am a father, my lord; but, for the sake of all other fathers, I think I ought not to forgive her, for fear of encouraging other silly girls, like herself, to throw themselves away without the consent of their parents.

*Love.* I hope there will be no danger of that, sir. Young ladies, with minds like my Fanny's, would startle at the very shadow of vice; and, when they know to what uneasiness only an indiscretion has exposed her, her example, instead of encouraging, will rather serve to deter them.

*Mrs Heid.* Indiscretion, quotha! a mighty pretty delicate word to express disobedience!

*Lord Ogle.* For my part, I indulge my own passions too much to tyrannize over those of other people. Poor souls, I pity them! And you must forgive them, too. Come, come, melt a little of your flint, Mr Sterling!

*Ster.* Why, why, as to that, my lord—to be sure he is a relation of yours, my lord——what say you, sister Heidelberg?

*Mrs Heid.* The girl's ruined, and I forgive her.

*Ster.* Well—so do I, then.—Nay, no thanks—[*To* LOVEWELL *and* FANNY, *who seem preparing to speak.*] there's an end of the matter.

*Lord Ogle.* But, Lovewell, what makes you dumb all this while?

*Love.* Your kindness, my lord——I can scarce believe my own senses—they are all in a tumult of fear, joy, love, expectation, and gratitude; I ever was, and am now more bound in duty to your lordship. For you, Mr Sterling, if every moment of my life, spent gratefully in your service, will, in some measure, compensate the want of fortune, you, perhaps, will not repent your goodness to me. And you, ladies, I flatter myself, will not, for the future, suspect me of artifice and intrigue—I shall be happy to oblige and serve you.—As for you, sir John——

*Sir John.* No apologies to me, Lovewell; I do not deserve any. All I have to offer, in excuse for what has happened, is my total ignorance of your situation. Had you dealt a little more openly with me, you would have saved me, and yourself, and that lady (who, I hope, will pardon my behaviour), a great deal of uneasiness. Give me leave, however, to assure you, that, light and capricious as I may have appeared, now my infatuation is over, I have sensibility enough to be ashamed of the part I have acted, and honour enough to rejoice at your happiness.

*Love.* And now, my dearest Fanny, though we are seemingly the happiest of beings, yet all our joys will be dampt, if his lordship's generosity and Mr Sterling's forgivenness, should not be succeeded by the indulgence, approbation, and consent of these our best benefactors. [*To the audience.*] [*Exeunt omnes.*

THE

# ENGLISH MERCHANT.

BY

*COLMAN.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### MEN.

LORD FALBRIDGE, *attached to* AMELIA.
SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS, *an attainted Scottish knight, father to* AMELIA.
FREEPORT, *the English merchant.*
SPATTER, *a meddling author.*
OWEN, *servant to* SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS.
LA FRANCE, *servant to* LORD FALBRIDGE.
*Servants, &c.*

### WOMEN.

LADY ALTON, *attached to* LORD FALBRIDGE.
AMELIA, *daughter to* SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS.
MRS GOODMAN—*lets lodgings.*
MOLLY, *maid to* AMELIA.

*Scene—London.*

## ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A room in* MRS GOODMAN'S *house.*

*Enter* MOLLY, *struggling with* SPATTER.

*Mol.* BE quiet, Mr Spatter! let me alone! Pray now, sir! It is a strange thing a body can't go about the house without being pestered with your impertinence—Why sure!—

*Spat.* Introduce me to your mistress, then—come, there's a good girl!—and I will teaze you no longer.

*Mol.* Indeed I shan't—Introduce you to my lady! for what, pray?

*Spat.* Oh! for a thousand things. To laugh, to chat, to take a dish of tea, to—

*Mol.* You drink tea with my lady! I should not have thought of that—On what acquaintance?

*Spat.* The most agreeable in the world, child! a new acquaintance.

*Mol.* Indeed, you mistake yourself mightily—you are not a proper acquaintance for a person of her quality, I assure you, sir!

*Spat.* Why, what quality is she, then?

*Mol.* Much too high quality for your acquaintance, I promise you. What! a poet-man! that sits write, write, write, all day long, scribbling a pack of nonsense for the newspapers!—You're fit for nothing above a chambermaid.

*Spat.* That's as much as to say, that you think me just fit for you. Eh, child?

*Mol.* No, indeed; not I, sir. Neither my lady nor I will have any thing to say to you.

*Spat.* Your mistress and you both give yourselves a great many airs, my dear. Your poverty, I think, might pull down your pride.

*Mol.* What does the fellow mean by poverty?

*Spat.* I mean, that you are starving.

*Mol.* Oh the slanderous monster! We! Starving! Who told you so? I'd have you to know, sir, my lady has a very great fortune.

*Spat.* So 'tis a sign, by her way of life and appearance.

*Mol.* Well; she lives privately, indeed, because she loves retirement; she goes plain, because she hates dress; she keeps no table, because she is an enemy to luxury—In short, my lady is as rich as a Jew, and you are an impertinent coxcomb!

*Spat.* Come, come! I know more of your mistress than you imagine.

*Mol.* And what do you know of her?

*Spat.* Oh, I know what I know.

*Mol.* Well! [*Alarmed.*

*Spat.* I know who she is, and where she came from; I am very well acquainted with her family, and know her whole history.

*Mol.* How can that be?

*Spat.* Very easily—I have correspondence everywhere. As private as she may think herself, it is not the first time that I have seen or heard of Amelia.

*Mol.* Oh gracious! as sure as I am alive this man will discover us! [*Apart.*] Mr Spatter, my dear Mr Spatter! if you know any thing, sure you would not be so cruel as to betray us!

*Spat.* My dear Mr Spatter! O ho! I have guessed right—there is something then?

*Mol.* No, sir, there is nothing at all; nothing that signifies to you or any body else.

*Spat.* Well, well. I'll say nothing; but then, you must—

*Mol.* What?

*Spat.* Come; kiss me, hussy!

*Mol.* I say kiss you, indeed!

*Spat.* And you'll introduce me to your mistress?

*Mol.* Not I, I promise you.

*Spat.* Nay, no mysteries between you and me, child! Come; here's the key to all locks, the clue to every maze, and the discloser of all secrets; money, child! Here, take this purse; you see I know something; tell me the rest, and I have the fellow to it in my pocket.

*Mol.* Ha, ha, ha! poor Mr Spatter! Where could you get all this money, I wonder! Not by your poetries, I believe. But what signifies telling you any thing, when you are acquainted with our whole history already? You have correspondence everywhere, you know. There, sir! take up your filthy purse again, and remember, that I scorn to be obliged to any body but my mistress.

*Spat.* There's impudence for you! when, to my certain knowledge, your mistress has not a guinea in the world; you live in continual fear of being discovered; and you will both be utterly undone in a fortnight, unless lord Falbridge should prevent it, by taking Amelia under his protection. You understand me, child?

*Mol.* You scandalous wretch! Did you ever hear such a monster? I won't stay a moment longer with him—But you are quite mistaken about me and my mistress, I assure you, sir. We are in the best circumstances in the world; we have nothing to fear; and we don't care a farthing for you—So your servant, Mr Poet!

[*Exit.*

*Spat.* Your servant, Mrs Pert! "We are in the best circumstances in the world." Ay, that is as much as to say, they are in the utmost distress. "We have nothing to fear."—That is, they are frightened out of their wits—"And we don't care a farthing for you."—Meaning, that they will take all the care in their power, that I shall not find them out—But I may be too hard for you yet, young gentlewoman! I have earned but a poor livelihood by mere scandal and abuse; but if I could once arrive at doing a little substantial mischief, I should make my fortune.

*Enter* MRS GOODMAN.

Oh! your servant, Mrs Goodman! Yours is the most unsociable lodging-house in town. So many ladies, and only one gentleman! and you won't take the least notice of him.

*Mrs Good.* How so, Mr Spatter?

*Spat.* Why, did not you promise to introduce me to Amelia?

*Mrs Good.* To tell you the plain truth, Mr Spatter, she don't like you. And, indeed, I don't know how it is, but you make yourself a great many enemies.

*Spat.* Yes; I believe I do raise a little envy.

*Mrs Good.* Indeed you are mistaken, sir. As you are a lodger of mine, it makes me quite uneasy to hear what the world says of you. How do you contrive to make so many enemies, Mr Spatter?

*Spat.* Because I have merit, Mrs Goodman.

*Mrs Good.* May be so; but nobody will allow it but yourself. They say that you set up for a wit, indeed; but that you deal in nothing but scandal, and think of nothing but mischief.

*Spat.* I do speak ill of the men sometimes, to be sure; but then, I have a great regard for women—provided they are handsome: and, that I may give you a proof of it, introduce me to Amelia.

*Mrs Good.* You must excuse me; she and you would be the worst company in the world; for she never speaks too well of herself, nor the least ill of any body else. And then her virtue—

*Spat.* Pooh, pooh! she speaks ill of nobody, because she knows nobody; and as for her virtue, ha, ha!

*Mrs Good.* You don't believe much in that, I suppose?

*Spat.* I have not overmuch faith, Mrs Goodman. Lord Falbridge, perhaps, may give a better account of it.

*Mrs Good.* Lord Falbridge can say nothing but what would be extremely to her honour, I assure you, sir. [SPATTER *laughs.*] Well, well, you may laugh, but it is very true.

*Spat.* Oh, I don't doubt it; but you don't tell the whole truth, Mrs Goodman. When any of your friends or acquaintance sit for their pictures, you draw a very flattering likeness. All characters have their dark side; and if they have but one eye, you give them in profile. Your great friend, Mr Freeport, for instance, whom you are always praising for his benevolent actions———

*Mrs Good.* He is benevolence itself, sir.

*Spat.* Yes, and grossness itself, too. I remem-

ber him these many years. He always cancels an obligation by the manner of conferring it; and does you a favour, as if he were going to knock you down.

*Mrs Good.* A truce with your satire, good Mr Spatter! Mr Freeport is my best friend; I owe him every thing; and I can't endure the slightest reflection on his character. Besides, he can have given no offence to Lady Alton, whatever may be the case with Amelia.

*Spat.* Lady Alton! she is a particular friend of mine to be sure; but, between you and me, Mrs Goodman, a more ridiculous character than any you have mentioned. A *bel esprit* forsooth! and as vain of her beauty as learning, without any great portion of either. A fourth grace, and a tenth muse! who fancies herself enamoured of Lord Falbridge, because she would be proud of such a conquest; and has lately bestowed some marks of distinction on me, because she thinks it will give her credit among persons of letters.

*Mrs Good.* Nay, if you can't spare your own friends, I don't wonder at your attacking mine—and so, sir, your humble servant. But stay! here's a post-chaise stopped at our door; and here comes a servant with a portmanteau. 'Tis the gentleman for whom my first floor was taken, I suppose.

*Spat.* Very likely: well, you will introduce me to him at least, Mrs Goodman.

*Enter a Servant with a portmanteau*—SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS *following.*

*Sir Wil.* You are Mrs Goodman, I suppose, madam?

*Mrs Good.* At your service, sir.

*Sir Wil.* Mr Owen, I believe, has secured apartments here?

*Mrs Good.* He has, sir.

*Sir Wil.* They are for me, madam—Have you any other lodgers?

*Mrs Good.* Only that gentleman, sir; and a young lady———

*Spat.* Of great beauty and virtue. Eh, Mrs Goodman?

*Mrs Good.* She has both, sir; but you will see very little of her, for she lives in the most retired manner in the world.

*Sir Wil.* Her youth and beauty are matter of great indifference to me; for I shall be as much a recluse as herself.—Is there any news at present stirring in London?

*Mrs Good.* Mr Spatter can inform you, sir, for he deals in news. In the mean while, I'll prepare your apartments.

[*Exit, followed by the servant.*——SIR WILLIAM *walks up and down, without taking notice of* SPATTER.

*Spat.* [*Aside*] This must be a man of quality, by his ill manners. I'll speak to him.——Will your lordship give me leave——

[*To* SIR WILLIAM.

*Sir Wil.* Lordship! I am no lord, sir, and must beg not to be honoured with the name.

*Spat.* It is a kind of mistake, that cannot displease at least.

*Sir Wil.* I don't know that. None but a fool would be vain of a title, if he had one; and none but an impostor would assume a title, to which he has no right.

*Spat.* Oh, you're of the house of commons, then, a member of parliament, and are come up to town to attend the sessions, I suppose, sir?

*Sir Wil.* No matter what I am, sir.

*Spat.* Nay, no offence, I hope, sir. All I meant was to do you honour. Being concerned in two evening posts, and one morning paper, I was willing to know the proper manner of announcing your arrival.

*Sir Wil.* You have connexions with the press, then, it seems, sir?

*Spat.* Yes, sir; I am an humble retainer to the Muses, an author. I compose pamphlets on all subjects, compile magazines, and do newspapers.

*Sir Wil.* Do newspapers! What do you mean by that, sir?

*Spat.* That is, sir, I collect the articles of news from the other papers, and make new ones for the postscript; translate the mails, write occasional letters from Cato and Theatricus, and give fictitious answers to supposed correspondents.

*Sir Wil.* A very ingenious, as well as honourable employment, I must confess, sir.

*Spat.* Some little genius is requisite, to be sure. Now, sir, if I can be of any use to you—if you have any friend to be praised, or any enemy to be abused; any author to cry up, or minister to run down; my pen and talents are entirely at your service.

*Sir Wil.* I am much obliged to you, sir; but, at present, I have not the least occasion for either. In return for your genteel offers, give me leave to trouble you with one piece of advice. When you deal in private scandal, have a care of the cudgel; and when you meddle with public matters, beware of the pillory.

*Spat.* How, sir! are you no friend to literature? Are you an enemy to the liberty of the press?

*Sir Wil.* I have the greatest respect for both; but railing is the disgrace of letters, and personal abuse the scandal of freedom: foul-mouthed critics are, in general, disappointed authors; and they, who are the loudest against ministers, only mean to be paid for their silence.

*Spat.* That may be sometimes, sir; but give me leave to ask you——

*Sir Wil.* Do not ask me at present, sir! I see a particular friend of mine coming this way, and I must beg you to withdraw!

*Spat.* Withdraw, sir! first of all, allow me to——

*Sir Wil.* Nay, no reply! we must be in private. [*Thrusting out* SPATTER.

What a wretch! as contemptible as mischievous. Our generous mastiffs fly at men from an instinct of courage; but this fellow's attacks proceed from an instinct of baseness——But here comes the faithful Owen, with as many good qualities as that execrable fellow seems to have bad ones.

*Enter* OWEN.

Well, Owen; I am safe arrived, you see.

*Owen.* Ah, sir! would to heaven you were as safe returned again! Have a care of betraying yourself to be sir William Douglas!——During your stay here, your name is Ford, remember.

*Sir Wil.* I shall take care—But tell me your news—What have you done since your arrival? Have you heard any thing of my daughter? Have you seen lord Brumpton? Has he any hope of obtaining my pardon?

*Owen.* He had, sir.

*Sir Wil.* And what can have destroyed it, then?

*Owen.* My lord Brumpton is dead, sir.

*Sir Wil.* Dead!

*Owen.* I saw him within this week in apparent good health; he promised to exert his whole interest in your favour: by his own apoointment I went to wait on him yesterday noon, when I was stunned with the news of his having died suddenly the evening before.

*Sir Wil.* My lord Brumpton dead! the only friend I had remaining in England; the only person, on whose intercession I relied for my pardon. Cruel fortune! I have now no hope but to find my daughter. Tell me, Owen; have you been able to hear any tidings of her?

*Owen.* Alas, sir, none that are satisfactory. On the death of Mr Andrews, in whose care you left her, being cruelly abandoned by the relation who succeeded to the estate, she left the country some months ago, and has not since been heard of.

*Sir Wil.* Unhappy there, too! When will the measure of my misfortunes be full? When will the malice of my fate be satisfied? Proscribed, condemned, attainted, (alas, but too justly!) I have lost my rank, my estate, my wife, my son, and all my family! One only daughter remains! Perhaps a wretched wanderer, like myself, perhaps in the extremest indigence, perhaps dishonoured—Ha! that thought distracts me!

*Owen.* My dear master, have patience! Do not be ingenious to torment yourself, but consult your safety, and prepare for your departure.

*Sir Wil.* No, Owen. Hearing, providentially, of the death of my friend Andrews, paternal care and tenderness drew me hither; and I will not quit the kingdom, till I learn something of my child, my dear Amelia, whom I left a tender innocent, in the arms of the best of women, twenty years ago. Her sex demands protection; and she is now of an age, in which she is more exposed to misfortunes, than even in helpless infancy.

*Owen.* Be advised; depart, and leave that care to me. Consider, your life is now at stake.

*Sir Wil.* My life has been too miserable to render me very solicitous for its preservation—But the complection of the times is changed; the very name of the party, in which I was unhappily engaged, is extinguished, and the whole nation is unanimously devoted to the throne. Disloyalty and insurrection are now no more, and the sword of justice is suffered to sleep. If I can find my child, and find her worthy of me, I will fly with her to take refuge in some foreign country; if I am discovered in the search, I have still some hopes of mercy.

*Owen.* Heaven grant your hopes may be well founded!

*Sir Wil.* Come, Owen! let us behave at least with fortitude in our adversity! Follow me to my apartment, and let us consult what measures we shall take in searching for Amelia. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* AMELIA'S *apartment.*

*Enter* AMELIA *and* MOLLY.

*Ame.* Poor Molly! to be teased with that odious fellow, Spatter!

*Mol.* But, madam, Mr Spatter says he is acquainted with your whole history.

*Ame.* Mere pretence, in order to render himself formidable. Be on your guard against him, my dear Molly; and remember to conceal my misery from him and all the world. I can bear poverty, but am not proof against insult and contempt.

*Mol.* Ah, my dear mistress, it is to no purpose to endeavour to hide it from the world. They will see poverty in my looks. As for you, you can live upon the air; the greatness of your soul seems to support you; but, lack-a-day! I shall grow thinner and thinner every day of my life.

*Ame.* I can support my own distress, but yours touches me to the soul. Poor Molly! the labour of my hands shall feed and clothe you—Here! dispose of this embroidery to the best advantage; what was formerly my amusement, must now become the means of our subsistence. Let us be obliged to nobody, but owe our support to industry and virtue.

*Mol.* You're an angel! let me kiss those dear hands that have worked this precious embroidery! let me bathe them with my tears! You're an angel upon earth. I had rather starve in your service, than live with a princess. What can I do to comfort you?

*Ame.* Thou faithful creature—only continue to be secret: you know my real character; you know I am in the utmost distress: I have opened my heart to you, but you will plant a dagger there, if you betray me to the world.

*Mol.* Ah, my dear mistress, how should I betray you! I go no where, I converse with nobody

but yourself and Mrs Goodman: besides, the world is very indifferent about other people's misfortunes.

*Ame.* The world is indifferent, it is true; but it is curious, and takes a cruel pleasure in tearing open the wounds of the unfortunate.

*Enter* MRS GOODMAN.

Mrs Goodman!

*Mrs Good.* Excuse me, madam: I took the liberty of waiting on you to receive your commands. 'Tis now near three o'clock. You have provided nothing for dinner, and have scarce taken any refreshment these three days.

*Ame.* I have been indisposed.

*Mrs Good.* I am afraid you are more than indisposed—You are unhappy—Pardon me! but I cannot help thinking that your fortune is unequal to your appearance.

*Ame.* Why should you think so? You never heard me complain of my fortune.

*Mrs Good.* No, but I have too much reason to believe it is inferior to your merit.

*Ame.* Indeed, you flatter me.

*Mrs Good.* Come, come; you must not indulge this melancholy. I have a new lodger, an elderly gentleman, just arrived, who does me the honour to partake of my dinner; and I must have your company, too. He seems to be in trouble, as well as you. You must meet; two persons in affliction may perhaps become a consolation to each other. Come, let us take some care of you.

*Ame.* Be assured, Mrs Goodman, I am much obliged to you for your attention to me; but I want nothing.

*Mrs Good.* Dear madam! you say you want nothing, and you are in want of every thing.

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* [*To* MRS GOODMAN.] Lady Alton, madam, sends her compliments, and will wait upon you after dinner.

*Mrs Good.* Very well; my best respects to her ladyship, and I shall be ready to attend her. [*Exit Servant.*] There, there is one cause of your uneasiness! Lady Alton's visit is on your account. She thinks you have robbed her of lord Falbridge's affections, and that is the occasion of her honouring me with her company.

*Ame.* Lord Falbridge's affections!

*Mrs Good.* Ah! my dear Amelia, you don't know your power over his heart. You have reconciled it to virtue—But come! let me prevail on you to come with me to dinner.

*Ame.* You must excuse me.

*Mrs Good.* Well, well, then I'll send you something to your own apartment. If you have any other commands, pray honour me with them, for I would fain oblige you, if I knew how it were in my power. [*Exit.*

*Ame.* What an amiable woman! If it had not been for her apparent benevolence and goodness of heart, I should have left the house on Mr Spatter's coming to lodge in it.

*Mol.* Lady Alton, it seems, recommended him as a lodger here; so he can be no friend of yours on that account; for to be sure she owes you no good will on account of my lord Falbridge.

*Ame.* No more of lord Falbridge, I beseech you, Molly. How can you persist in mentioning him, when you know, that, presuming on my situation, he has dared to affront me with dishonourable proposals?

*Mol.* Ah, madam, but he sorely repents it, I promise you, and would give his whole estate for an opportunity of seeing you once more, and geting into your good graces again.

*Ame.* No; his ungenerous conduct has thrown him as much below me, as my condition had placed me beneath him. He imagined he had a right to insult my distress; but I will teach him to think it respectable. [*Exeunt.*

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An apartment at* Mrs GOODMAN'S.

*Enter* LADY ALTON *and* SPATTER.

*Spat.* BUT you won't hear me, madam!

*Lady Alt.* I have heard too much, sir! This wandering *incognita* a woman of virtue! I have no patience.

*Spat.* Mrs Goodman pretends to be convinced of her being a person of honour.

*Lady Alt.* A person of honour, and openly receive visits from men! seduce lord Falbridge! No, no! reserve this character for your next novel, Mr Spatter! it is an affront to my understanding. I begin to suspect you have betrayed me; you have gone over to the adverse party, and are in the conspiracy to abuse me.

*Spat.* I, madam! Neither her beauty, nor her virtue—

*Lady Alt.* Her beauty! her virtue! Why, thou wretch, thou grub of literature, whom I, as patroness of learning and encourager of men of letters, willing to blow the dead coal of genius, fondly took under my protection, do you remember what I have done for you?

*Spat.* With the utmost gratitude, madam.

*Lady Alt.* Did not I draw you out of the garret, where you daily spun out your flimsy brain

to catch the town flies in your cobweb dissertations? Did not I introduce you to lord Dapperwit, the Apollo of the age? And did not you dedicate your silly volume of poems on several occasions to him? Did not I put you into the list of my visitors, and order my porter to admit you at dinner-time? Did not I write the only scene in your execrable farce, which the audience vouchsafed an hearing? And did not my female friend, Mrs Melpomene, furnish you with Greek and Latin mottoes for your twopenny essays?

*Spat.* I acknowledge all your ladyship's goodness to me. I have done every thing in my power to shew my gratitude, and fulfil your ladyship's commands.

*Lady Alt.* Words, words, Mr Spatter! You have been witness of lord Falbridge's inconstancy. A perfidious man! False as Phaon to Sappho, or Jason to Medea! You have seen him desert me for a wretched vagabond; you have seen me abandoned like Calypso, without making a single effort to recall my faithless Ulysses from the Siren that has lured him from me.

*Spat.* Be calm but one moment, madam, and I'll—

*Lady Alt.* Bid the sea be calm, when the winds are let loose upon it. I have reason to be enraged. I placed you in genteel apartments in this house, merely to plant you as a spy; and what have you done for me? Have you employed your correspondence to any purpose? or discovered the real character of this infamous woman, this insolent Amelia?

*Spat.* I have taken every possible method to detect her. I have watched Amelia herself like a bailiff, or a duenna; I have overheard private conversations; have sounded the landlady; tampered with the servants; opened letters; and intercepted messages.

*Lady Alt.* Good creature! my best Spatter! And what?—what have you discovered?

*Spat.* That Amelia is a native of Scotland; that her surname, Walton, is probably not real, but assumed; and that she earnestly wishes to conceal both the place of her birth, and her family.

*Lady Alt.* And is that all?

*Spat.* All that I have been able to learn as yet, madam.

*Lady Alt.* Wretch! of what service have you been, then? Are these your boasted talents? When we want to unravel an ambiguous character, you have made out that she wishes to lie concealed; and when we wish to know who she is, you have just discovered that she is a native of Scotland!

*Spat.* And yet, if you will give me leave, madam, I think I could convince you that these discoveries, blind and unsatisfactory as they may appear to you at first, are of no small consequence.

*Lady Alt.* Of what consequence can they possibly be to me, man?

*Spat.* I'll tell you, madam. It is a rule in politics, when we discover something, to add something more. Something added to something, makes a good deal; upon this basis I have formed a syllogism.

*Lady Alt.* What does the pedant mean? A syllogism!

*Spat.* Yes, a syllogism: as, for example, any person who is a native of Scotland, and wishes to be concealed, must be an enemy to the government. Amelia is a native of Scotland, and wishes to be concealed. . Ergo, Amelia is an enemy to the government.

*Lady Alt.* Excellent! admirable logic! but I wish we could prove it to be truth.

*Spat.* I would not lay a wager of the truth of it; but I would swear it.

*Lady Alt.* What, on a proper occasion, and in a proper place, my good Spatter?

*Spat.* Willingly; we must make use of what we know, and even of what we don't know.—— Truth is of a dry and simple nature, and stands in need of some little ornament. A lie, indeed, is infamous; but fiction, your ladyship, who deals in poetry, knows is beautiful.

*Lady Alt.* But the substance of your fiction, Spatter?

*Spat.* I will lodge an information, that the father of Amelia is a disaffected person, and has sent her to London for treasonable purposes: nay, I can, upon occasion, even suppose the father himself to be in London: in consequence of which, you will probably recover lord Falbridge, and Amelia will be committed to prison.

*Lady Alt.* You have given me new life. I took you for a mere stainer of paper; but I have found you a Machiavel. I hear somebody coming. Mrs Goodman has undertaken to send Amelia hither. Ha! she's here—Away, Spatter, and wait for me at my house: you must dine with me; and, after dinner, like true politicians, we will settle our plan of operations over our coffee. Away, away this instant!

[*Exit* SPATTER.

A convenient engine this Mr Spatter: the most impudent thorough-paced knave in the three kingdoms! with the heart of Zoilus, the pen of Mævius, and the tongue of Thersites. I was sure he would stick at nothing. The writings of authors are public advertisements of their qualifications; and when they profess to live upon scandal, it is as much as to say, that they are ready for every other dirty work, in which we chuse to employ them. But now for Amelia: if she proves tractable, I may forego the use of this villain, who almost makes me hate my triumph, and be ashamed of my revenge.

*Enter* AMELIA.

*Ame.* Mrs Goodman has informed me, that your ladyship had desired to see me: I wait your commands, madam.

*Lady Alt.* Look you, young woman: I am sensible how much it is beneath a person of my rank to parley with one of your condition. once, however, I am content to wave all ceremony; and if you behave as you ought to do, you have nothing to fear, child.

*Ame.* I hope I have never behaved otherwise than as I ought to do, madam.

*Lady Alt.* Yes; you have received the visits of lord Falbridge; you have endeavoured to estrange his affections from me: but, if you encourage him in his infidelity to me, tremble for the consequence: be advised, or you are ruined.

*Ame.* I am conscious of no guilt, and know no fear, madam.

*Lady Alt.* Come, come, Mrs Amelia; this high strain is out of character with me. Act over your Clelia, and Cleopatra, and Cassandra, at a proper time; and let me talk in the style of nature and common sense to you. You have no lord Falbridge, no weak young nobleman to impose upon at present.

*Ame.* To impose upon! I scorn the imputation, and am sorry to find that your ladyship came hither, merely to indulge yourself in the cruel pleasure of insulting one of the unhappiest of her sex. [*Weeping.*

*Lady Alt.* You are mistaken; I came hither to concert measures for your happiness, to assist your poverty, and relieve your distress. Leave this house; leave London; I will provide you a retirement in the country, and supply all your wants. Only renounce all thoughts of lord Falbridge, and never let him know the place of your retreat.

*Ame.* Lord Falbridge! What is lord Falbridge to me, madam?

*Lady Alt.* To convince me you have no commerce with him, accept of my proposals.

*Ame.* No, madam; the favours which you intend me, I could not receive without blushing.—I have no wants but what I can supply myself; no distresses which your ladyship can relieve; and I will seek no refuge but my own virtue.

*Lady Alt.* Your virtue! Ridiculous! If you are a woman of virtue, what is the meaning of all this mystery? Who are you? What are you? Who will vouch for your character?

*Ame.* It wants no vouchers; nor will I suffer myself to be arraigned, like a criminal, till I know by what authority you take upon you to act as my judge.

*Lady Alt.* Matchless confidence! Yes, yes; it is too plain; I see you are the very creature I took you for; a mere adventurer: some strolling princess, that are perhaps more frugal of your favours than the rest of your sisterhood, merely to enhance the price of them.

*Ame.* Hold, madam! This opprobrious language is more injurious to your own honour than to mine. I see the violence of your temper, and will leave you. But you may one day know that my birth is equal to your own; my heart is, perhaps, more generous; and whatever may be my situation, I scorn to be dependant on any body, much less on one, who has so mean an opinion of me, and who considers me as her rival.

[*Exit* AMELIA.

*Lady Alt.* Her rival! Unparalleled insolence! An open avowal of her competition with me!—Yes; I see Spatter must be employed. Her rival! I shall burst with indignation.

*Enter* MRS GOODMAN.

*Lady Alt.* Mrs Goodman! where is Mr Spatter?

*Mrs Good.* He went out the moment he left your ladyship.——But you seem disordered; shall I get you some hartshorn, madam?

*Lady Alt.* Some poison. Rival! I shall choak with rage. You shall hear from me. You, and your Amelia. You have abused me; you have conspired against my peace; and, be assured, you shall suffer for it. [*Exit.*

*Mrs Good.* What a violent woman! her passion makes her forget what is due to her sex and quality. Ha! Mr Freeport!

*Enter* FREEPORT.

My best friend! Welcome to London! When did you arrive from Lisbon?

*Free.* But last night.

*Mrs Good.* I hope you have had a pleasant voyage?

*Free.* A good trading voyage—I have got money, but I have got the spleen, too. Have you any news in town?

*Mrs Good.* None at all, sir.

*Free.* So much the better. The less news, the less nonsense. But what strange lady have you had here? I met her as I was coming up: she rushed by like a fury, and almost swept me down stairs again with the wind of her hoop-petticoat.

*Mrs Good.* Ah! jealousy! jealousy is a terrible passion, especially in a woman's breast, Mr Freeport.

*Free.* Jealousy! Why, she is not jealous of you, Mrs Goodman?

*Mrs Good.* No; but of a lodger of mine.

*Free.* Have you any new lodgers since I left you?

*Mrs Good.* Two or three, sir; the last arrived but to-day; an elderly gentleman, who will see no company.

*Free.* He's in the right. Three parts in four

of mankind are knaves or fools; and the fourth part live by themselves. But who are your other lodgers?

*Mrs Good.* An author, and a lady.

*Free.* I hate authors. Who is the lady?

*Mrs Good.* She calls herself Amelia Walton; but I believe that name is not her real one.

*Free.* Not her real one! Why, sure she is a woman of character?

*Mrs Good.* A woman of character! She is an angel. She is most miserably poor; and yet haughty to an excess.

*Free.* Pride and poverty! A sad composition, Mrs Goodman!

*Mrs Good.* No, sir; her pride is one of her greatest virtues: it consists in depriving herself of almost all necessaries, and concealing it from the world. Though every action speaks her to be a woman of birth and education, she lives upon the work of her own hands, without murmur or complaint. I make use of a thousand stratagems to assist her against her will; I prevail on her to keep the money due for rent for her support, and furnish her with every thing she wants at half its prime cost; but if she perceives or suspects these little artifices, she takes it almost as ill as if I had attempted to defraud her. In short, sir, her unshaken virtue and greatness of soul under misfortunes, makes me consider her as a prodigy, and often draws tears of pity and admiration from me.

*Free.* Ah! women's tears lie very near their eyes! I never cried in my life; and yet I can feel, too; I can admire, I can esteem, but what signifies whimpering? Hark ye, Mrs Goodman! This is a very extraordinary account you give of this young woman; you have raised my curiosity, and I'll go see this lodger of yours; I am rather out of spirits, and it will serve to amuse me.

*Mrs Good.* Oh, sir, you can't see her; she neither pays visits, nor receives them, but lives in the most retired manner in the world.

*Free.* So much the better. I love retirement as well as she. Where are her apartments?

*Mrs Good.* On this very floor, on the other side of the staircase.

*Free.* I'll go and see her immediately.

*Mrs Good.* Indeed you can't, sir. It is impossible.

*Free.* Impossible! where is the impossibility of going into a room? Come along!

*Mrs Good.* For Heaven's sake, Mr Freeport!

*Free.* Pshaw! I have no time to lose; I have business half an hour hence.

*Mrs Good.* But won't it be rather indelicate, sir? Let me prepare her first.

*Free.* Prepare her—With all my heart—But remember that I am a man of business, Mrs Goodman, and have no time to waste in ceremony and compliment.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—AMELIA'S *Apartment.*

AMELIA *at work, and* MOLLY.

*Ame.* No, Polly! if lord Falbridge comes again, I am resolved not to see him.

*Mol.* Indeed, madam, he loves you above all the world; I am sure of it; and I verily believe he will run mad, if you don't hear what he has to say for himself.

*Ame.* Speak no more of him.

*Enter* MRS GOODMAN.

Mrs Goodman!

*Mrs Good.* Pardon me, madam! Here is a gentleman of my acquaintance begs you would give him leave to speak with you.

*Ame.* A gentleman! who is he?

*Mrs Good.* His name is Freeport, madam. He has a few particularities; but he is the best-hearted man in the world. Pray, let him come in, madam!

*Ame.* By no means; you know I receive visits from nobody.

*Enter* FREEPORT.

Bless me! he's here! This is very extraordinary indeed. Mrs Goodman.

*Free.* Don't disturb yourself, young woman! don't disturb yourself!

*Mol.* Mighty free and easy, methinks!

*Ame.* Excuse me, sir; I am not used to receive visits from persons entirely unknown.

*Free.* Unknown! There is not a man in all London better known than I am. I am a merchant; my name is Freeport; Freeport of Crutched-Friars; inquire upon 'Change!

*Ame.* Mrs Goodman! I never saw the gentleman before. I am surprised at his coming here.

*Free.* Pooh! Prithee! Mrs Goodman knows me well enough. [MRS GOODMAN *talks apart with* AMELIA.] Ay! that's right, Mrs Goodman. Let her know who I am, and tell her to make herself easy.

*Mrs Good.* But the lady does not chuse we should trouble her, sir.

*Free.* Trouble her! I'll give her no trouble; I came to drink a dish of tea with you; let your maid get it ready, and we will have it here instead of your parlour—In the mean time, I will talk with this lady; I have something to say to her.

*Ame.* If you had any business, sir—

*Free.* Business! I tell you I have very particular business; so sit down, and let's have the tea.

*Mrs Good.* You should not have followed me so soon, sir.

*Free.* Pooh, prithee! [*Exit* MRS GOODMAN.

*Mol.* This is the oddest man I ever saw in my life!

*Ame.* Well, sir, as I see you are a particular acquaintance of Mrs Goodman—But, pray, what are your commands for me, sir! [*They sit.*

*Free.* I tell you what, young woman; I am a plain man, and will tell you my mind in an instant. I am told that you are one of the best women in the world: very virtuous, and very poor. I like you for that: but they say you are excessively proud too; now, I don't like you for that, madam.

*Mol.* Free and easy still, I see.

*Ame.* And pray, sir, who told you so?

*Free.* Mrs Goodman.

*Ame.* She has deceived you, sir; not in regard to my pride, perhaps, for there is a certain right pride which every body, especially women, ought to possess; and as to virtue, it is no more than my duty; but as to poverty, I disclaim it; they who want nothing, cannot be said to be poor.

*Free.* It is no such thing: you don't speak the truth; and that is worse than being proud. I know very well that you are as poor as Job, that you are in want of common necessaries, and don't make a good meal above once a fortnight.

*Mol.* My mistress fasts for her health, sir.

*Free.* Hold your tongue, hussy! what, are you proud too?

*Mol.* Lord, what a strange man!

*Free.* But however, madam, proud or not proud does not signify twopence—Hark ye, young woman! it is a rule with me (as it ought to be with every good Christian) to give a tenth part of my fortune in charity. In the account of my profits, there stands, at present, the sum of two thousand pounds on the credit side of my books; so that I am two hundred pounds in arrear. This I look upon as a debt due from my fortune to your poverty—Yes, your poverty I say; so, never deny it. There's a bank note for two hundred pounds; and now I am out of your debt—Where the deuce is this tea, I wonder?

*Mol.* I never saw such a man in my life!

*Ame.* I don't know that I ever was so thoroughly confounded! [*Apart.*]—Sir!

[*To* FREEPORT.

*Free.* Well?

*Ame.* This noble action has surprised me still more than your conversation; but you must excuse my refusal of your kindness; for, I must confess, that if I were to accept what you offer, I don't know when I should be able to restore it.

*Free.* Restore it! why, who wants you to restore it? I never dreamt of restitution.

*Ame.* I feel, I feel your goodness to the bottom of my soul; but you must excuse me. I have no occasion for your bounty; take your note, sir, and bestow it where it is wanted.

*Mol.* Lord, madam! you are ten times stranger than the gentleman—I tell you what, sir; [*To* FREEPORT.] it does not signify talking; we are in the greatest distress in the world, and if it had not been for the kindness and good nature of Mrs Goodman, we might have died by this time. My lady has concealed her distress from every body that was willing and able to relieve her; you have come to the knowledge of it in spite of her teeth; and I hope that you will oblige her, in spite of her teeth, to accept of your generous offer.

*Ame.* No more, my dear Polly; if you would not have me die with shame, say no more! Return the gentleman his note, with my best thanks for his kindness; tell him, I durst not accept of it; for when a woman receives presents from a man, the world will always suspect that she pays for them at the expence of her virtue.

*Free.* What's that! what does she say, child?

*Mol.* Lord, sir, I hardly know what she says. She says, that when a gentleman makes a young lady presents, he is always supposed to have a design upon her virtue.

*Free.* Nonsense! why should she suspect me of an ungenerous design, because I do a generous action?

*Mol.* Do you hear, madam?

*Ame.* Yes, I hear; I admire; but I must persist in my refusal: if that scandalous fellow Spatter were to hear of this, he would stick at saying nothing.

*Free.* Eh! what's that?

*Mol.* She is afraid you should be taken for her lover, sir.

*Free.* I for your lover! not I. I never saw you before. I don't love you; so, make no scruples upon that account. I like you well enough, but I don't love you at all: not at all, I tell you—If you have a mind never to see my face any more, good by t'ye!—You shall never see me any more. If you like I should come back again, I'll come back again; but I lose time; I have business; your servant! [*Going.*

*Ame.* Stay, sir! do not leave me without receiving the sincerest acknowledgments of my gratitude and esteem; but, above all, receive your note again, and do not put me any longer to the blush!

*Free.* The woman is a fool!

*Enter* MRS GOODMAN.

*Ame.* Come hither, I beseech you, Mrs Goodman.

*Mrs Good.* Your pleasure, madam?

*Ame.* Here! take this note which that gentleman has given me by mistake; return it to him, I charge you; assure him of my esteem and admiration; but let him know I need no assistance, and cannot accept it. [*Exit* AME.

*Mrs Good.* Ah, Mr Freeport! you have been at your old trade. You are always endeavouring to do good actions in secret; but the world always finds you out, you see.

*Mol.* Well; I don't believe there are two stranger people in England, than my mistress and that gentleman—one so ready to part with mo-

ney, and the other so unwilling to receive it—don't believe her, sir; for, between friends, she is in very great need of assistance, I assure you.

*Mrs Good.* Indeed, I believe so.

*Free.* Oh, I have no doubt on't; so I'll tell you what, Mrs Goodman, keep the note, and supply her wants out of it without her knowledge—and now I think of it, that way is better than t'other.

*Mol.* I never saw such a strange man in my life! [*Exit* MOL.

*Mrs Good.* I shall obey your kind commands, sir—Poor soul! my heart bleeds for her; her virtue and misfortunes touch me to the soul!

*Free.* I have some little feeling for her, too; but she is too proud. A fine face; fine figure; well-behaved; well-bred; and, I dare say, an excellent heart!—But she is too proud; tell her so, d'ye hear? tell her she is too proud. I shall be too late for my business—I'll see her again soon—It is a pity she is so proud. [*Exeunt.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.—*A hall.*

SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS *alone.*

*Sir Wil.* A YOUNG woman!.a native of Scotland! her name Amelia! supposed to be in the greatest distress, and living in total retirement! If fortune should, for once, smile upon me, and have thrown me into the very same house! I don't know what to think of it; and yet, so many uncommon circumstances together, recall the memory of my misfortunes, and awaken all the father in my bosom.—I must be satisfied.

*Enter* MOLLY *crossing the stage.*

*Sir Wil.* Madam! will you permit me to speak one word to you?

*Mol.* [*coming forward.*] If you please; what is your pleasure, sir?

*Sir Wil.* I presume, madam, you are the charming young woman I heard of?

*Mol.* I have a few charms in the eyes of some folks, to be sure, sir.

*Sir Wil.* And you are a native of Scotland, they tell me?

*Mol.* I am; at your service, sir.

*Sir Wil.* Will you give me leave to ask the name of your family? Who is your father?

*Mol.* I really don't remember my father.

*Sir Wil.* Ha! not remember him, do you say? [*Earnestly.*

*Mol.* No, sir; but I have been told that he was—

*Sir Wil.* Who, madam?

*Mol.* One of the most eminent bakers in Aberdeen, sir.

*Sir Wil.* Oh, I conceive! You live, I suppose, with the young lady I meant to speak to. I mistook you for the lady herself.

*Mol.* You did me a great deal of honour, I assure you, sir.

*Sir Wil.* But you are acquainted with your mistress's family?

*Mol.* Family, sir!

*Sir Wil.* Ay; who are her parents?

*Mol.* She comes of very creditable parents, I promise you, sir.

*Sir Wil.* I don't doubt it; but who are they? I have particular reasons for inquiring.

*Mol.* Very likely so; but I must beg to be excused, sir.

*Sir Wil.* Of what age is your mistress? you will tell me that, at least.

*Mol.* Oh, as to her age, she don't care who knows that; she is too young to deny her age yet a-while. She is about one-and-twenty, sir.

*Sir Wil.* Precisely the age of my Amelia. [*Aside.*] One-and-twenty, you say? [*To* MOL.

*Mol.* Yes, sir; and I am about two-and twenty; there is no great difference between us.

*Sir Wil.* [*Apart.*] It must be so; her age, her country, her manner of living, all concur to prove her mine; my dear child, whom I left to taste of misfortune from her cradle!

*Mol.* [*Apart.*] What is he muttering, I wonder? I wish this one-and-twenty has not turned the old gentleman's head.

*Sir Wil.* Let me beg the favour of you to conduct me to your mistress: I want to speak with her.

*Mol.* She will see no company, sir; she is indisposed; she is in great affliction; and receives no visits at all.

*Sir Wil.* Mine is not a visit of form or ceremony, or even impertinent curiosity; but on the most urgent business. Tell her, I am her fellow-countryman.

*Mol.* What! are you of Scotland, too, sir?

*Sir Wil.* I am. Tell her I take part in her afflictions, and may, perhaps, bring her some consolation.

*Mol.* There is something mighty particular about this old gentleman! He has not brought another two hundred pounds, sure! [*Apart.*] Well, sir; since you are so very pressing, since you say you are our fellow-countryman, if you will walk this way, I'll speak to my mistress, and see what I can do for you.

*Sir Wil.* I am obliged to you. [*Exit* MOLLY. And now, if I may trust the forebodings of an old fond heart, I am going to throw my arms about my daughter. [*Exit.*

*As* SIR WILLIAM *follows* MOLLY *out on one side,* SPATIER *appears on the other.*

*Spat.* There they go! what the deuce can that old fellow and Amelia's maid do together? The slut is certainly conducting him to her mistress! In less than half an hour I expect that Amelia will be apprehended. In the mean time, I must be upon the watch; for, since I have laid the information, it is high time that I should collect some materials to support it.—Who comes here? Lord Falbridge's valet de chambre: his errand is to Amelia, without doubt; something may be learnt there, perhaps.

*Enter* LA FRANCE.

Ha! Monsieur La France! your servant.

*La France.* Serviteur! ver glad to see you, Monsieur Spatter.

*Spat.* Well; what brings you here? eh, Monsieur La France?

*La France.* Von lettre, Monsieur.

*Spat.* A letter to whom?

*La France.* From my lor to Mademoiselle Amelie.

*Spat.* Oh! you're mistaken, Monsieur; that letter is for lady Alton.

*La France.* Lady Alton! no, ma foi! it be for Mademoiselle. I am no mistake. Je ne me trompe pas la dessus.

*Spat.* Why, have not you carried several letters from lord Falbridge to lady Alton?

*La France.* Oh, que oui! but dis be for de young laty dat lif here; for Mademoiselle: mi lor love her! ma foi; he lov her à la folie.

*Spat.* And he loved lady Alton à la folie, did not he?

*La France.* Oh, que non! he lov her so gentely! si tranquilement; ma foi, he lov her à la Françoise.—But now he lov Mademoiselle; he no eat, no sleep, no speak, but Mademoiselle; no tink, but of Mademoiselle; quite an oder ting, Monsieur Spatter, quite an oder ting!

*Spat.* Well, well; no matter for that; the letter is for lady Alton, I promise you.

*La France.* Ah! pardonnez moi!

*Spat.* It is, I assure you; and to convince you of it, see here, Monsieur! lady Alton has sent you five guineas to pay the postage.

*La France.* Five guineas! ma foi, I believe I was mistake, indeed.

*Spat.* Ay, ay; I told you you were mistaken: and after all, if it should not be for her ladyship, she will inclose it in another case, and send it to Amelia, and nobody will be the wiser.

*La France.* Fort bien; ver well; la voila. [*Gives the letter.*] I have got five guinees; I don't care.

*Spat.* Why should you? Where's the harm, if one woman should receive a letter written to another? There will be nothing lost by it; for, if Amelia don't receive this, she will receive others; and letters of this sort are all alike, you know.

*La France.* Begar dat is ver true. Adieu, sir.—I have execute my commission: adieu. Oh! je fais bien mes commissions, moi!

[*Exit* LA FRANCE.

*Spat.* See the effects of secret service-money! Intelligence must be paid for; and the bribing couriers is a fair stratagem, by all the laws of war. Shall I break open this letter, or carry it to lady Alton as it is? No; I'll read it myself, that I may have the credit of communicating the contents. Let me see! [*Opens the letter, and reads.*] 'Thou dearest, most respectable, and 'most virtuous of women!' So! this is à la folie, indeed, as Monsieur La France calls it.—'If any 'consideration could add to my remorse, for the 'injury I have offered you, it would be the dis-'covery of your real character.' Ah, ah! 'I 'know who you are. I know you are the daugh-'ter of the unhappy sir William Douglas.'—So, so!—'Judge, then, of the tumult of my soul; 'which is only preserved from the horrors of des-'pair, by the hopes of rendering some service to 'the father, which may, perhaps, in some mea-'sure, atone for my behaviour to his too justly of-'fended daughter. Give me leave, this evening, 'to sue for my pardon at your feet, and to in-'form you of the measures I have taken. In the 'mean time, believe me unalterably yours.

'FALBRIDGE.'

This is a precious packet, indeed!—Now, if I could discover the father, too!—His lordship's visit will be too late in the evening, I fancy; the lady will not be at home; but, before she goes, once more to my old trade of eaves-dropping about her apartments! The old gentleman and she are certainly together, and their conversation, perhaps, may be curious. At all events, lady Alton must be gratified. Men of letters never get any thing of their patrons, but by sacrificing to their foibles. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—AMELIA'S *apartment.*

SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS *and* AMELIA *discovered sitting.*

*Sir Wil.* Every word you utter, touches me to the soul. Nothing but such noble sentiments could have supported your spirit under so many misfortunes.

*Ame.* Perhaps it is to my misfortunes that I owe those sentiments. Had I been brought up in ease and luxury, my mind, which has learnt fortitude from distress, might have been enfeebled by prosperity.

*Sir Wil.* Thou most amiable of thy sex, I conjure thee to hide nothing from me. You say you were born at Aberdeen; you confess that you are derived from one of those unhappy families, who suffered themselves to be so fatally deluded, and drawn from their allegiance to the best of kings.

Why, why then, will you not tell me all? Why do you endeavour to conceal your name and family?

*Ame.* My duty to my family obliges me to silence. My father's life is forfeited by the sentence of the law; and he owes his existence, at this hour, to flight or secrecy. He may be in England; he may, for aught I know, be in London; and the divulging my name and family might create a fresh search after him, and expose him to new perils. Your conversation, it is true, has inspired me with respect and tenderness; but yet, you are a stranger to me: I have reason to fear every thing, and one word may undo me.

*Sir Wil.* Alas! one word may make us both happy. Tell me; of what age were you when your cruel fortune separated you from your father?

*Ame.* An infant; so young, that I have not the least traces of him in my memory.

*Sir Wil.* And your mother; what became of her?

*Ame.* She, as I have often heard, was carried off by a fever, while she was preparing to embark with me, to follow the fortunes of my father. He, driven almost to despair by this last stroke of ill fortune, continually shifted his place of residence abroad; but, for some years past, whether by his death, the miscarriage of letters, the infidelity of friends, or other accidents, I have not received the least intelligence of him; and now, I almost begin to despair of hearing of him again, though I still persist in my inquiries.

*Sir Wil.* [*Rising.*] It must be so; it is as I imagined. All these touching circumstances are melancholy witnesses of the truth of it. Yes, my child! I am that unhappy father whom you lost so early; I am that unfortunate husband, whom death, and my unhappy fate, almost at the very same period, divorced from the best of wives; I am—I am sir William Douglas.

*Ame.* Sir William Douglas! have I lived to se my father! then Heaven has heard my prayers; this is the first happy moment of my unfortunate life.—[*Embracing.*]—And yet, your presence here fills me with apprehensions; I tremble for your safety, for your life; how durst you venture your person in this kingdom? how can you expose yourself to the danger of discovery in this town? My whole soul is in a tumult of fear and joy.

*Sir Wil.* Do not be alarmed, my Amelia; fear nothing; Heaven begins to smile upon my fortune. To find thee so unexpectedly, to find thee with a mind so superior to distress, softens the anguish of my past life, and gives me happy omens of the future.

*Ame.* Oh, sir! by the joy I receive from the embraces of a father, let me conjure you to provide for your safety! do not expose me to the horror of losing you again; of losing you for ever! Quit this town immediately; every moment that you remain in it, is at the hazard of your life; I am ready to accompany you to any part of the world.

*Sir Wil.* My dear child! how I grieve that your youth and virtue should be involved in my misfortunes! Yes, we will quit this kingdom; prepare for your departure, and we may leave London this evening.

*Enter* OWEN, *hastily.*

Ha! Owen! thou art come at a happy moment. I have found my daughter. This is your young mistress, the paragon of her sex, my dear, my amiable Amelia.

*Owen.* Oh, sir, this is no time for congratulation. You are in the most imminent danger.

*Sir Wil.* What is the matter?

*Owen.* The officers of government are, at this instant, in the house. I saw them enter; I heard them say they had authority to apprehend some suspected person, and I ran immediately to inform you of your danger.

*Ame.* Oh, Heaven! My father, what will you do?

*Owen.* Do not be alarmed, sir; we are two; we are armed; and we may, perhaps, be able to make our way through them; I will stand by you to the last drop of my blood.

*Sir Wil.* Thou faithful creature! Stay, Owen; our fears may betray us: till we are sure we are attacked, let us shew no signs of opposition.

*Enter* MOLLY, *hastily.*

*Mol.* My dear mistress! we are ruined; we are undone for ever.

*Ame.* There are officers of justice in the house; I have heard it; tell me, tell me this instant, whom do they seek for?

*Mol.* For you, madam, for you; they have a warrant to apprehend you, they say.

*Ame.* But they have no warrant to apprehend any body else?

*Mol.* No, madam; nobody else; but I will follow you to the end of the world.

*Ame.* My dear Polly, I did not mean you. Retire, sir! [*To* SIR WILLIAM.] For Heaven's sake, leave me to their mercy! they can have no facts against me; my life has been as innocent as unfortunate, and I must soon be released.

*Sir Wil.* No, my child; I will not leave thee.

*Mol.* My child? This is sir William Douglas, then, as sure as I am alive!

*Sir Wil.* Besides, retiring at such a time might create suspicion, and incur the danger we would wish to avoid.

*Mol.* They will be in the room in a moment; I think I hear them upon the stairs; they would have been here before me, if Mr Freeport had not come in and stopt them.

*Sir Wil.* Courage, my dear Amelia!

*Ame.* Alas, sir! I have no terrors but for you.

*Owen.* They are here, sir!

*Mol.* Oh, lord! here they are, indeed! I am frighted out of my wits!

*Enter* MRS GOODMAN, FREEPORT, *and Officer.*

*Free.* A warrant to seize her? a harmless young woman? it is impossible!

*Offi.* Pardon me, sir; if the young lady goes by the name of Amelia Walton, I have a warrant to apprehend her.

*Free.* On what account?

*Offi.* As a dangerous person.

*Free.* Dangerous!

*Offi.* Yes, sir; suspected of disaffection and treasonable practices.

*Ame.* I am the unhappy object of your search, sir; give me leave to know the substance of the accusation.

*Offi.* I cannot tell you particulars, madam; but information upon oath has been made against you, and I am ordered to apprehend you.

*Mrs Good.* But you will accept of bail, sir? I will be bound for all I am worth in the world.

*Offi.* In these cases, madam, bail is not usual; and, if ever accepted at all, it is excessively high; and given by persons of very large property, and known character.

*Free.* Well; my property is large enough, and my character very well known. My name is Freeport.

*Offi.* I know you very well, sir.

*Free.* I'll answer for her appearance; I'll be bound in a penalty of five hundred pounds, a thousand, two thousand, or what sum you please.

*Offi.* And will you enter into the recognisance immediately?

*Free.* With all my heart; come along!

[*Going.*

*Offi.* And are you in earnest, sir?

*Free.* Ay, to be sure. Why not?

*Offi.* Because, sir, I'll venture to say, there are but few people that place their money on such securities.

*Free.* So much the worse; he, who can employ it in doing good, places it on the best security, and puts it out at the highest interest in the world.

[*Exit* FREEMAN, *with the Officer.*

*Sir Wil.* I can hardly trust my eyes and ears! who is this benevolent gentleman?

*Mrs Good.* I don't wonder you are surprised at Mr Freeport's manner of proceeding, sir; but it is his way. He is not a man of compliment; but he does the most essential service in less time, than others take in making protestations.

*Mol.* Here he is again! Heaven reward him!

*Re-enter* FREEPORT.

*Free.* So! that matter is dispatched; now to our other affairs! this is a busy day with me.—Look'ye, sir William; we must be brief; there is no time to be lost.

*Sir Wil.* How! am I betrayed then!

*Free.* Betrayed! no; but you are discovered.

*Owen.* What! my master discovered!

[*Offers to draw.*

*Free.* [*To* OWEN.] Nay, never clap thy hand to thy sword, old Trusty! your master is in danger, it is true; but not from me, I promise you. Go, and get him a post-chaise, and let him pack off this instant; that is the best way of shewing your attachment to him at present.——Twenty years, sir William, have not made so great an alteration in you, but I knew you the moment I saw you.

*Mrs Good.* Harbour no distrust of Mr Freeport, sir; he is one of the worthiest men living.

*Ame.* I know his worthiness. His behaviour to the officer but this moment, uncommonly generous as it appeared, is not the first testimony he has given me to day, of his noble disposition.

*Free.* Noble! p'shaw! nonsense!

*Sir Wil.* [*To* FREEPORT.] Sir; the kind manner in which you have been pleased to interest yourself in my affairs, has almost as much overpowered me, as if you had surprised me with hostile proceedings. Which way shall I thank you for your goodness to me and my Amelia?

*Free.* Don't thank me at all; when you are out of danger, perhaps I may make a proposal to you, that will not be disagreeable. At present, think of nothing but your escape; for I should not be surprised, if they were very shortly to make you the same compliment they have paid to Amelia: and, in your case, which is really a serious one, they might not be in the humour to accept of my recognisance.

*Mrs Good.* Mr Freeport is in the right, sir; every moment of delay is hazardous; let us prevail upon you to depart immediately! Amelia, being wholly innocent, cannot be long detained in custody, and as soon as she is released, I will bring her to you, wherever you shall appoint.

*Free.* Ay, ay; you must be gone directly, sir! and as you may want ready money upon the road, take my purse! [*Offering his purse.*

*Sir Wil.* No, thou truest friend, I have no need of it. With what wonderful goodness have you acted towards me and my unhappy family!

*Free.* Wonderful! why wonderful? Would not you have done the same, if you had been in my place?

*Sir Wil.* I hope I should.

*Free.* Well, then, where is the wonder of it? Come, come, let us see you make ready for your departure!

*Sir Wil.* Thou best of men!

*Free.* Best of men? Heaven forbid! I have done no more than my duty by you. I am a man myself; and am bound to be a friend to all mankind, you know. [*Exeunt.*

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.—SPATTER'S *apartment.*

LADY ALTON *with a letter in her hand, and* SPATTER.

*Lady Alt.* THANKS, my good Spatter! many thanks for this precious epistle! more precious at present than one of Ovid, Pliny, or Cicero. It is at once a billet-doux and a state paper; and serves at the same time to convict her of conspiring against me, and the public.

*Spat.* It is a valuable manuscript, to be sure, madam; and yet that is but the least half of my discoveries, since I left your ladyship.

*Lady Alt.* But is not this half, according to the Grecian axiom, more than the whole, Mr Spatter?

*Spat.* When you know the whole, I believe you will think not, madam.

*Lady Alt.* Out with it then! I am impatient to be mistress of it.

*Spat.* By intercepting this letter of lord Falbridge's, your ladyship sees that we have discovered Amelia to be the daughter of sir William Douglas.

*Lady Alt.* True.

*Spat.* But what would you say, madam, if I had found out the father himself, too?

*Lady Alt.* Sir William Douglas!

*Spat.* Is now in this house, madam.

*Lady Alt.* Impossible!

*Spat.* Nothing more certain. He arrived this morning under a feigned name. I saw him conducted to Amelia's apartment. This raised my suspicion, and I planted myself at her door, with all the circumspection of a spy, and address of a chambermaid. There I overheard their mutual acknowledgments of each other; and a curious interview it was. First they wept for grief; and then they wept for joy; and then they wept for grief again. Their tears, however, were soon interrupted by the arrival of the officer, whose purpose was partly defeated, as you have already heard, by the intervention of Freeport.

*Lady Alt.* Yes, the brute! But that delay was not half so unfortunate, as your discoveries have been happy, Spatter; for my revenge shall now return on them with redoubled fury.—Issue out upon them once more; see what they are about; and be sure to give me immediate notice, if lord Falbridge should come. [*Going.*

*Spat.* Stay, madam. After intercepting the letter, I sent for your ladyship, that, at so critical a juncture, you might be present on the spot: and if you go home again, we shall lose time, which perhaps may be precious, in running to and fro. Suppose you step into the study, till I return. You will find my own answer to my last pamphlet, and the two first sheets of the next month's Magazine to amuse you.

*Lady Alt.* Planned like a wise general! Do you then go, and reconnoitre the enemy, while I lie here in ambush to reinforce you as soon as there shall be occasion. Do but give the word, we'll make a vigorous sally, put their whole body to rout, and take Amelia and her father prisoners. [*Exeunt severally.*

### SCENE II.—*A hall.*

*Enter* FREEPORT.

*Free.* I don't know how it is; but this Amelia, here, runs in my head strangely. Ever since I saw her, I think of nothing else. I am not in love with her? In love with her! that's nonsense. But I feel a kind of uneasiness, a sort of pain that—I don't know what to make of it—— I'll speak to her father about her.

*Enter* OWEN.

Well, old true-penny! Have you prepared every thing for sir William's departure?

*Owen.* We had need be going, indeed, sir; we are in continual danger while we stay here; who d'ye think lodged the information against Madam Amelia?

*Free.* Who?

*Owen.* A person who lodges in this very house, it seems: one Mr Spatter, sir.

*Free.* Spatter! how d'ye know?

*Owen.* I had it from one of the officers, who came to apprehend her.

*Free.* A dog! I could find in my heart to cut off his ears with my own hands, and save him the disgrace of the pillory.

*Owen.* My poor master is always unfortunate. If lord Brumpton had lived a week longer, sir William might perhaps have been out of the reach of their malice.

*Free.* Lord Brumpton?

*Owen.* Yes, sir. He was soliciting my master's pardon; but died before he had accomplished his benevolent intentions.

*Free.* Ha! A thought strikes me! [*Apart.*]—Hark ye, friend, [*To* OWEN] does sir William know the present lord Brumpton?

*Owen.* No, sir. The late lord had no children, or near relations, living; and, indeed, he was the only surviving friend of my poor master in the kingdom.

*Free.* Is the chaise at the door?

*Owen.* Not yet, sir; but I expect it every moment.

*Free.* Run to your master, and desire him not to go till I see him. Tell him I am going out upon his business, and will be back within this hour.

*Owen.* I will let him know immediately. Ah, you're a true friend, indeed, sir.

[*Shaking him earnestly by the hand.*

*Free.* Pooh! prithee!

*Owen.* Ah! Heaven preserve you!

[*Exit* OWEN.

*Free.* Fare thee well, old honesty! By the death of lord Brumpton, without children or near relations living, as Owen says, the title and estate come to my old friend Jack Brumpton, of Liverpool, who is of a distant branch, a fourth cousin, for aught I know, who has past his whole life in a compting-house; and who, a few years ago, no more dreamt of being a lord, than grand signior, or great mogul. He has so good a heart, that I believe it is impossible even for a title to corrupt it. I know he is in town; so I'll go to him immediately, acquaint him with the obligation entailed on him, to be of service to sir William, and make him heir to the benevolence of his predecessor, as well as his wealth and dignity. [*Going, stops.*] Who's here? Mrs Goodman and Spatter, as I live! Oh the dog! my blood rises at the villain. If I don't take care, I shall incur an action of battery for caneing the rascal.

*Enter* MRS GOODMAN *and* SPATTER.

*Mrs Good.* In short, Mr Spatter, I must beg leave to give you warning, and desire that you would provide yourself with another lodging as soon as possible.

*Spat.* What now? What the deuce is the matter with you, Mrs Goodman?

*Mrs Good.* I see now the meaning of lady Alton's recommendation of such a lodger to my house, as well as of her visits to Amelia, and her frequent conferences with you, sir.

*Spat.* The woman is certainly out of her senses.

*Free.* What has been laid to your charge is no joke, sir.

*Spat.* What! are you there to keep up her backhand, Mr Freeport! What is all this?

*Free.* You are found out to be a spy, sir.

*Mrs Good.* A person who pries into the secrets of families, merely to betray them.

*Free.* An informer!

*Mrs Good.* An eaves-dropper!

*Free.* A liar!

*Spat.* Right-hand and left! this is too much: what the plague is the matter with you both?

*Mrs Good.* Did not you go and tell that Amelia was a native of Scotland?

*Spat.* Well; and where's the harm of being born in Scotland?

*Free.* None; except by your malicious interpretation, rascal; by means of which, you made it the ground of an information against her, and were the cause of her being apprehended.

*Spat.* And you were the cause of her being released; every man in his way, Mr Freeport!

*Free.* Look you, sirrah! you are one of those wretches, who miscall themselves authors; a fellow, whose heart, and tongue, and pen, are equally scandalous; who try to insinuate yourself every where, to make mischief, if there is none, and to increase it, if you find any. But if you fetch and carry like a spaniel, you must be treated like one. I have observed that you are always loitering in the passages; but if I catch you within the wind of a door again, I'll beat you till you are as black as your own ink, sirrah.—Now, you know my mind. [*Exit.*

*Spat.* Very civil, and very polite, indeed, Mr Freeport. Ha! here comes my friend, lord Falbridge.

*Mrs Good.* Lord Falbridge your friend? For shame, Mr Spatter!

*Enter* LORD FALBRIDGE, *hastily.*

*Lord Fal.* Mrs Goodman, I rejoice to see you. Tell me, how does my Amelia? I have heard of her distress, and flew to her relief.—Was she alarmed? Was she terrified?

*Mrs Good.* Not much, my lord: she sustained the shock with the same constancy that she endures every affliction.

*Lord Fal.* I know her merit; I am too well acquainted with her greatness of soul; and hope it is not yet too late for me to do justice to her virtue. Go to her, my dear Mrs Goodman, and tell her, I beg to see her: I have something that concerns her very nearly, to impart to her.

*Mrs Good.* I will, my lord. [*Exit.*

*Lord Fal.* Oh, Mr Spatter! I did not see you. What have you got there, sir?

[*Seeing a paper in his hand.*

*Spat.* Proposals for a new work, my lord!—May I beg the honour of your lordship's name among my list of subscribers?

*Lord Fal.* With all my heart, sir. I am already in your debt on another account.

[*Pulling out his purse.*

*Spat.* To me, my lord? You do me a great deal of honour; I should be very proud to be of the least service to your lordship.

*Lord Fal.* You have been of great service to me already, sir. It was you, I find, lodged the information against this young lady.

*Spat.* I did no more than my duty, my lord.

*Lord Fal.* Yes; you did me a favour, sir.—I consider only the deed, and put the intention quite out of the question. You meant to do Amelia a prejudice, and you have done me a service: for, by endeavouring to bring her into distress, you gave me an opportunity of shewing my eagerness to relieve her. There, sir! there is for the good you have done, while you meant to make mischief. [*Giving him a few guineas.*] But take this along with it; if you ever presume to mention the name of Amelia any more, or give yourself the least concern about her, or her affairs, I'll——

*Spat.* I am obliged to your lordship. [*Bowing.*

*Lord Fal.* Be gone, sir; leave me.

*Spat.* Your most humble servant, my lord!—So! I am abused by every body; and yet I get money by every body; egad, I believe I am a much cleverer fellow than I thought I was! [*Exit.*

*Lord Fal.* Alas! I am afraid that Amelia will not see me. What would I not suffer to repair the affront that I have offered her?

*Enter* MOLLY.

Ha! Polly! how much am I obliged to you for sending me notice of Amelia's distress?

*Mol.* Hush, my lord! Speak lower, for Heaven's sake! My mistress has so often forbade me to tell any thing about her, that I tremble still at the thoughts of the confidence I have put in you. I was bewitched, I think, to let you know who she was.

*Lord Fal.* You were inspired, Polly! Heaven inspired you to acquaint me with all her distresses, that I might recommend myself to her favour again, by my zeal to serve her, though against her will.

*Mol.* That was the reason I told you; for else, I am sure, I should die with grief to give her the least uneasiness.

*Lord Fal.* But may I hope to see Amelia? Will she let me speak with her?

*Mol.* No, indeed, my lord; she is so offended at your late behaviour, that she will not even suffer us to mention your name to her.

*Lord Fal.* Death and confusion! What a wretch have I made myself! Go, Polly; go and let her know, that I must speak with her; inform her, that I have been active for her welfare; and have authority to release her from the information lodged against her.

*Mol.* I will let her know your anxiety, my lord; but, indeed, I am afraid she will not see you.

*Lord Fal.* She must, Polly; she must. The agonies of my mind are intolerable. Tell her, she must come, if it be but for a moment; or else, in the bitterness of despair, I fear I shall break into her apartment, and throw myself at her feet.

*Mol.* Lud! you frighten me out of my wits. Have a little patience, and I'll tell my mistress what a taking you are in.

*Lord Fal.* Fly, then! I can taste no comfort, till I hear her resolution. [*Exit* MOLLY.

How culpably have I acted towards the most amiable of her sex! But I will make her every reparation in my power. The warmth and sincerity of my repentance shall extort forgiveness from her. By Heaven, she comes!—Death! how sensibly does an ungenerous action abase us! I am conscious of the superiority of her virtue, and almost dread the encounter.

*Enter* AMELIA.

*Ame.* I understand, my lord, that, by your application, I am held free of the charge laid against me; and that I am once more entirely at liberty. I am truly sensible of your good offices, and thank you for the trouble you have taken. [*Going.*

*Lord Fal.* Stay, madam! do not leave me in still greater distraction than you found me. If my zeal to serve you has had any weight with you, it must have inspired you with more favourable dispositions towards me.

*Ame.* You must pardon me, my lord, if I cannot so soon forget a very late transaction. After that, all your proceedings alarm me: nay, even your present zeal to serve me, creates new suspicions, while I cannot but be doubtful of the motives from which it proceeds.

*Lord Fal.* Cruel Amelia! for, guilty as I am, I must complain, since it was your own diffidence that was in part the occasion of my crime. Why did you conceal your rank and condition from me? Why did not you tell me, that you were the daughter of the unhappy sir William Douglas?

*Ame.* Who told you that I was so, my lord?

*Lord Fal.* Nay, do not deny it now: it is in vain to attempt to conceal it any longer; it was the main purport of my letter to apprize you of my knowledge of it.

*Ame.* Your letter, my lord!

*Lord Fal.* Yes; wild as it was, it was the offspring of compunction and remorse; and if it conveyed the dictates of my soul, it spoke me the truest of penitents. You did not disdain to read it, sure!

*Ame.* Indeed, my lord, I never received any letter from you.

*Lord Fal.* Not received any! I sent it this very morning. My own servant was the messenger. What can this mean? Has he betrayed me? At present, suffer me to compensate, as far as possible, for the wrongs I have done you: receive my hand and heart, and let an honourable marriage obliterate the very idea of my past conduct.

*Ame.* No, my lord; you have discovered me, it is true: I am the daughter of sir William Douglas. Judge for yourself, then; and think how I ought to look upon a man, who has insulted my distress, and endeavoured to tempt me to dishonour my family.

*Lord Fal.* Your justice must acquit me of the intention of that offence, since, at that time, I was ignorant of your illustrious extraction.

*Ame.* It may be so; yet your excuse is but an aggravation of the crime. You imagined me, perhaps, to be of as low and mean an origin, as you thought me poor and unhappy. You supposed that I had no title to any dowry but my honour, no dependance but on my virtue; and yet, you attempted to rob me of that virtue, which

was the only jewel that could raise the meanness of my birth, or support me under my misfortunes; which, instead of relieving, you chose to make the pandar to your vile inclinations.

*Lord Fal.* Thou most amiable of thy sex, how I adore thee! Even thy resentment renders thee more lovely in my eyes, and makes thee, if possible, dearer to me than ever. Nothing but our union can ever make me happy.

*Ame.* Such an union must not, cannot be.

*Lord Fal.* Why? What should forbid it?

*Ame.* My father.

*Lord Fal.* Your father! where is he? In whatever part of the world he now resides, I will convey you to him, and he shall ratify our happiness.

*Enter* MOLLY, *hastily.*

*Mol.* Oh Lord, madam! here's the angry lady coming again; she that made such a racket this morning.

*Ame.* Lady Alton?

*Mol.* Yes, madam.

*Lord Fal.* Lady Alton! Confusion! Stay, madam! [*To* AMELIA, *who is going.*

*Ame.* No, my lord; I have endured one affront from her already to-day; why should I expose myself to a second? Her ladyship, you know, has a prior claim to your attention. [*Exit.*

*Lord Fal.* Distraction! I had a thousand things to say to her.—Go, my dear Polly, follow my Amelia! Plead earnestly in my behalf; urge all the tenderest things that fancy can suggest, and return to me as soon as lady Alton is departed.

*Mol.* I will, my lord. Oh lud! here she is, as I am alive! [*Exit.*

*Lady Fal.* Abandoned by Amelia! and hunted by this fury! I shall run wild!

*Enter* LADY ALTON.

*Lady Alt.* You may well turn away from me; at length I have full conviction of your baseness. I am now assured of my own shame, and your falsehood. Perfidious monster!

*Lord Fal.* It is unjust to tax me with perfidy, madam. I have rather acted with too much sincerity. I long ago frankly declared to you the utter impossibility of our reconciliation.

*Lady Alt.* What! after having made your addresses to me? After having sworn the most inviolable affection for me? Oh, thou arch-deceiver!

*Lord Fal.* I never deceived you: when I professed a passion, I really entertained one: when I made my addresses to you, I wished to call you my wife.

*Lady Alt.* And what can you allege in excuse of your falsehood? Have you not been guilty of the blackest perjury?

*Lord Fal.* The change of my sentiments needs no excuse from me, madam; you were yourself the occasion of it. In spite of the torrent of fashion, and the practice of too many others of my rank in life, I have a relish for domestic happiness; and have always wished for a wife, who might render my home a delightful refuge from the cares and bustle of the world abroad. These were my views with you; but, thank Heaven, your outrageous temper happily betrayed itself in good time, and convinced me, that my sole aim in marriage would be frustrated: for I could neither have been happy myself, nor have made you so.

*Lady Alt.* Paltry evasion! You have abandoned me for your Amelia; you have meanly quitted a person of letters, a woman of rank and condition, for an illiterate vagabond, a needy adventurer.

*Lord Fal.* The person you mention, madam, is, indeed, the opposite of yourself; she is all meekness, grace, and virtue.

*Lady Alt.* Provoking traitor! You urge me past all sufferance. I meant to expostulate, but you oblige me to invective.—But, have a care! You are not so secure as you suppose yourself; and I may revenge myself sooner than you imagine.

*Lord Fal.* I am aware of your vindictive disposition, madam; for I know, that you are more envious than jealous, and rather violent than tender; but the present object of my affections shall be placed above your resentment, and challenge your respect.

*Lady Alt.* Away, fond man! I know that object of your affections better than yourself; I know who she is; I know who the stranger is that arrived for her this morning; I know all: men more powerful than yourself shall be apprised of the whole immediately; and within these two hours, nay, within this hour, you shall see the unworthy object, for which you have slighted me, with all that is dear to her and you, torn away from you perforce. [*Going.*

*Lord Fal.* Ha! how's this? Stay, madam! Explain yourself! But one word; do but hear me.

*Lady Alt.* No; I disdain to hear you: I scorn all explanation. I have discovered the contemptible cause of your inconstancy, and know you to be mean, base, false, treacherous, and perfidious. You have forfeited my tenderness; and, be assured, you shall feel the effects of my revenge. [*Exit.*

*Lord Fal.* What does she mean! The stranger that arrived to-day!—That arrived for my Amelia! Sure it cannot be. [*Pausing.*] Is it possible that———

*Re-enter* MOLLY.

Ha, Polly! explain these riddles to me. Lady Alton threatens me; she threatens my Amelia: does she know any thing? Her fury will trans-

port her to every extravagance: how dreadful is jealousy in a woman!

*Mol.* Ay, it is a dreadful thing, indeed, my lord. Well! Heaven send me always to be in love, and never to be jealous!

*Lord Fal.* But she talked of tearing Amelia from me perforce——And then some stranger—She threatens him, too: what is it she means?

*Mol.* What! a gentleman that came to madam Amelia? [*Alarmed.*

*Lord Fal.* Yes, to Amelia; and arrived this very day, she says.

*Mol.* We are ruined for ever! she means sir William Douglas!

*Lord Fal.* The father of my Amelia! Is he here?

*Mol.* Yes, my lord; I was bound to secrecy; but I can't help telling you the whole truth, because I am sure you will do all in your power to be of service to us.

*Lord Fal.* You know my whole soul, Polly: this outrageous woman's malice shall be defeated.

*Mol.* Heaven send it may!

*Lord Fal.* Be assured it shall: do not alarm your mistress; I fly to serve her, and will return as soon as possible.

*Mol.* I shall be miserable till we see you again, my lord. [*Exit.*

*Lord Fal.* And now, good Heaven! that art the protection of innocence, second my endeavours! enable me to repair the affront I have offered to injured virtue, and let me relieve the unhappy from their distresses. [*Exit.*

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—*Continues.*

*Enter* LORD FALBRIDGE *and* MOLLY, *meeting.*

*Mol.* OH, my lord! I am glad to see you returned.

*Lord Fal.* Where is your mistress? [*Eagerly.*

*Mol.* In her own chamber.

*Lord Fal.* And where is sir William Douglas?

*Mol.* With my mistress.

*Lord Fal.* And have there been no officers here to apprehend them?

*Mol.* Officers! No, my lord. Officers! you frighten me! I was in hopes, by seeing your lordship so soon again, that there were some good news for us.

*Lord Fal.* Never was any thing so unfortunate. The noble persons, to whom I meant to make application, were out of town; nor could by any means be seen or spoken with, till tomorrow morning: and, to add to my distraction, I learnt that a new information had been made, and a new warrant issued to apprehend sir William Douglas and Amelia.

*Mol.* Oh dear! What can we do then?

*Lord Fal.* Do! I shall run mad. Go, my dear Polly, go to your mistress, and sir William, and inform them of their danger. Every moment is precious, but perhaps they may yet have time to escape.

*Mol.* I will, my lord! [*Going.*

*Lord Fal.* Stay! [MOLLY *returns.*] My chariot is at the door; tell them not to wait for any other carriage, but to get into that, and drive away immediately.

*Mol.* I will, my lord. Oh dear! I never was so terrified in all my life! [*Exit* MOLLY.

*Lord Fal.* If I can but save them now, we may gain time for mediation. Ha! what noise? Are the officers coming? Who's here?

*Enter* LA FRANCE.

*La France.* Milor, mons. le duc de——

*Lord Fal.* Sirrah! villain! You have been the occasion of all this mischief. By your carelessness, or treachery, lady Alton has intercepted my letter to Amelia.

*La France.* Ladi Alton?

*Lord Fal.* Yes, dog; did not I send you here this morning with a letter?

*La France.* Oui, milor.

*Lord Fal.* And did you bring it here, rascal?

*La France.* Oui, milor.

*Lord Fal.* No, sirrah. You did not bring it; the lady never received any letter from me; she told me so herself: whom did you give it to? [LA FRANCE *hesitates.*] Speak, sirrah! or I'll shake your soul out of your body. [*Shaking him.*

*La France.* I giv it to——

*Lord Fal.* Who, rascal?

*La France.* Monsieur Spatter.

*Lord Fal.* Mr Spatter?

*La France.* Oui, milor; he promis to giv it to Mademoiselle Amelie, vid his own hand.

*Lord Fal.* I shall soon know the truth of that, sir, for yonder is Mr Spatter himself: run, and tell him I desire to speak with him!

*La France.* Oui, milor; ma foi, I vas very near kesh; I never was in more vilain embarras in all my life. [*Exit* LA FRANCE.

*Lord Fal.* My letter's falling into the hands of that fellow, accounts for every thing. The contents instructed him concerning Amelia. What a wretch I am! Destined every way to be of prejudice to that virtue, which I am bound to adore.

*Re-enter* LA FRANCE *with* SPATTER.

*Spat.* Monsieur la France tells me, that your lordship desires to speak with me—what are your commands, my lord? [*Pertly.*

*Lord Fal.* The easy impudence of the rascal puts me out of all patience! [*Aside.*

*Spat.* My lord!

*Lord Fal.* The last time I saw you, sir, you were rewarded for the good you had done; you must expect now to be chastised for your mischief.

*Spat.* Mischief, my lord?

*Lord Fal.* Yes, sir—where is that letter of mine, which La France tells me he gave you to deliver to a young lady of this house?

*Spat.* Oh the devil! [*Apart.*] Letter, my lord? [*Hesitates.*

*Lord Fal.* Yes, letter, sir; did not you give it him, La France?

*La France.* Oui, milor!

*Spat.* Y—e—e—s, yes, my lord; I had the letter of Monsieur La France, to be sure, my lord; but——but——

*Lord Fal.* But what, sirrah? give me the letter immediately; and if I find that the seal has been broken, I will break every bone in your skin.

*Spat.* For Heaven's sake, my lord! [*Feeling in his pockets.*] I—I—I have not got the letter about me at present, my lord; but if you will give me leave to step to my apartment, I'll bring it you immediately.

[*Offering to go.*

*Lord Fal.* [*Stopping him.*] No, no; that will not do, sir; you shall not stir, I promise you—Look ye, rascal! tell me, what is become of my letter, or I will be the death of you this instant.

[*Drawing.*

*Spat.* [*Kneeling.*] Put up your sword, my lord; put up your sword; and I will tell you every thing in the world. Indeed, I will.

*Lord Fal.* Well, sir; be quick then!

[*Putting up his sword.*

*Spat.* Lady Alton——

*Lord Fal.* Lady Alton! I thought so; go on, sir.

*Spat.* Lady Alton, my lord, desired me to procure her all the intelligence in my power, concerning every thing that past between your lordship and Amelia.

*Lord Fal.* Well, sir; what then?

*Spat.* A little patience, I entreat your lordship. Accordingly, to oblige her ladyship——one must oblige the ladies, you know, my lord—I did keep a pretty sharp look-out, I must confess: and this morning, meeting Monsieur La France, with a letter from your lordship in his charge, I very readily gave him five guineas of her ladyship's bounty-money, to put it into my hands.

*La France.* Oh diable! me voila perdu!

[*Aside.*

*Lord Fal.* How! A bribe, rascal?

[*To* LA FRANCE.

*La France.* Ah, milor! [*On his knees.*

*Spat.* At the same price for every letter, he would have sold a whole mail, my lord.

*La France.* Ayez pitiè de moi!

[*Holding up his hands.*

*Lord Fal.* Betray the confidence I reposed in you?

*Spat.* He offered me the letter of his own accord, my lord.

*La France.* No such ting, en veritè, milor!

*Spat.* Very true, I can assure your lordship.

*Lord Fal.* Well, well; I shall chastise him at my leisure. At present, sir, do you return me my letter.

*Spat.* I—I have it not about me, my lord.

*Lord Fal.* Where is it, rascal? tell me this instant, or——

*La France.* Lèdy Altón—

*Lord Fal.* [*To* SPATTER.] What! has she got it? speak, sirrah!

*Spat.* She has, indeed, my lord.

*Lord Fal.* Are not you a couple of villains?

*La France.* Oui, milor. } *both speak at once.*
*Spat.* Yes, my lord! }

*Lord Fal.* [*To* SPAT.] But hold, sir! a word more with you! As you seem to be lady Alton's chief agent, I must desire some further information from you.

*Spat.* Any thing in my power, my lord.

*Lord Fal.* I can account for her knowledge of Amelia, by means of my letter; but how did she discover sir William Douglas?

*Spat.* I told her, my lord.

*Lord Fal.* But how did you discover him yourself?

*Spat.* By listening, my lord.

*Lord Fal.* By listening?

*Spat.* Yes, by listening, my lord! let me but once be about a house, and I'll engage to clear it, like a ventilator, my lord. There is not a door to a single apartment in this house, but I have planted my ear at the key-hole.

*Lord Fal.* And were these the means by which you procured your intelligence?

*Spat.* Yes, my lord.

*Lord Fal.* Impossible!

*Spat.* Oh dear! nothing so easy; this is nothing at all, my lord! I have given an account of the plays in our journal, for three months together, without being nearer the stage than the pit-passage; and I have collected the debates of a whole session, for the magazine, only by attending in the lobby.

*Lord Fal.* Precious rascal!—Ha! who comes here? Lady Alton herself again, as I live!

*Spat.* [*Apart.*] The devil she is! I wish I was out of the house.

*Enter* LADY ALTON.

*Lady Alt.* What! still here, my lord? still witnessing to your own shame, and the justice of my resentment!

*Lord Fal.* Yes, I am still here, madam; and sorry to be made a witness of your cruelty and meanness: of your descending to arts, so much

beneath your rank; and practices, so unworthy of your sex.

*Lady Alt.* You talk in riddles, my lord!

*Lord Fal.* This gentleman shall explain them. Here, madam! here is the engine of your malice, the instrument of your vengeance, your prime minister, Mr Spatter.

*Lady Alt.* What have I to do with Mr Spatter?

*Lord Fal.* To do mischief—to intercept letters, and break them open; to overhear private conversations, and betray them; to——

*Lady Alt.* Have you laid any thing of this kind to my charge, sir?

[*To* SPATTER.

*Spat.* I have been obliged to speak the truth, though much against my will, indeed, madam.

*Lady Alt.* The truth! thou father of lies, did ever any truth proceed from thee? What! is his lordship your new patron! A fit Mæcenas for thee, thou scandal to the belles lettres!

*Lord Fal.* Your rage at this detection is but a fresh conviction of your guilt.

*Lady Alt.* Do not triumph, monster! you shall still feel the superiority I have over you. The object of your wishes is no longer under your protection; the officers of the government entered the house at the same time with myself, with a warrant to seize both Amelia and her father.

*Lord Fal.* Confusion! Are not they gone then? La France! villain! run, and bring me word!

*La France.* I go, milor! [*Exit.*

*Lady Alt.* Do not flatter yourself with any hopes; they have not escaped; here they are, secured in proper hands.

*Lord Fal.* Death and distraction! now I am completely miserable.

*Enter* SIR WILLIAM DOUGLAS, AMELIA, OWEN, *and Officers.*

*Lady Alt.* Yes, your misery is complete indeed; and so shall be my revenge. Oh! your servant, madam! [*Turning to* AMELIA] You now see to what a condition your pride and obstinacy have reduced you. Did not I bid you tremble at the consequences?

*Ame.* It was here alone that I was vulnerable. [*Holding her father's hand.*] Oh, madam! [*Turning to* LADY ALTON.] by the virtues that should adorn your rank, by the tenderness of your sex, I conjure you, pity my distress! do but release my father, and there are no concessions, however humiliating, which you may not exact from me.

*Lady Alt.* Those concessions now come too late, madam. If I were even inclined to relieve you, at present it is not in my power. [*Haughtily.*] Lord Falbridge perhaps may have more interest. [*With a sneer.*

*Lord Fal.* Cruel, insulting woman! [*To* LADY ALTON.] Do not alarm yourself, my Amelia!—Do not be concerned, sir! [*To* SIR WILLIAM.] Your enemies shall still be disappointed. Although ignorant of your arrival, I have, for some time past, exerted all my interest in your favour, and, by the mediation of those still more powerful, I do not despair of success. Your case is truly a compassionate one; and in that breast, from which alone mercy can proceed, thank Heaven, there is the greatest reason to expect it.

*Sir Wil.* I am obliged to you for your concern, sir.

*Lord Fal.* Oh, I owe you all this, and much more—But this is no time to speak of my offences, or repentance.

*Lady Alt.* This is mere trifling. I thought you knew on what occasion you came hither, sir.

[*To the Officer.*

*Offi.* Your reproof is too just, madam. I attend you, sir. [*To* SIR WILLIAM.

*Lord Fal.* Hold! Let me prevail on you, sir, [*To the Officer.*] to suffer them to remain here till to-morrow morning. I will answer for the consequences.

*Offi.* Pardon me, my lord! we should be happy to oblige you; but we must discharge the duty of our office.

*Lady Fal.* Distraction!

*Sir Wil.* Come, then! we follow you, sir! Be comforted, my Amelia! for my sake, be comforted! Wretched as I am, your anxiety shocks me more than my own misfortunes.

*As they are going out, Enter* FREEPORT.

*Free.* Heyday! what now! the officers here again! I thought we had satisfied you this morning. What is the meaning of all this?

*Offi.* This will inform you, sir.

[*Giving the warrant.*

*Free.* How's this? Let me see! [*Reading.*] 'This is to require you'—um um—'the bodies 'of William Ford and Amelia Walton'—um um —'suspected persons'—um—um—Well, well! I see what this is: but you will accept of bail, sir?

*Offi.* No, sir; this case is not bailable, and we have already been reprimanded for taking your recognizance this morning.

*Sir Wil.* Thou good man! I shall ever retain the most lively sense of your behaviour: but your kind endeavours to preserve the poor remainder of my proscribed life are in vain. We must submit to our destiny. [*All going.*

*Free.* Hold, hold! one word, I beseech you, sir? [*To the Officer.*] a minute or two will make no difference—Bail then, it seems, will not do, sir?

*Officer.* No, sir.

*Free.* Well, well; then I have something here that will perhaps. [*Feeling in his pocket.*

*Lord Fal.* How!

*Lady Alt.* What does he mean?

*Free.* No, it is not there.——It is in t'other pocket, I believe. Here, sir William! [*Producing a parchment.*] Ask the gentleman, if that will not do.——But, first of all, read it yourself, and let us hear how you like the contents.

*Sir Wil.* What do I see! [*Opening and perusing it.*] My pardon! the full and free pardon of my offences! Oh heaven! and is it to you then, to you, sir, that I owe all this?---Thus, thus let me shew my gratitude to my benefactor!

[*Falling at his feet.*

*Free.* Get up, get up, sir William! Thank Heaven, and the most gracious of monarchs. You have very little obligation to me, I promise you.

*Ame.* My father restored! Then I am the happiest of women!

*Lord Fal.* A pardon! I am transported.

*Lady Alt.* How's this? a pardon!

*Free.* Under the great seal, madam.

*Lady Alt.* Confusion! what! am I baffled at last then? Am I disappointed even of my revenge?—Thou officious fool! [*To* FREEPORT.] May these wretches prove as great a torment to you, as they have been to me! As for thee, [*To* LORD FALBRIDGE.] thou perfidious monster, may thy guilt prove thy punishment! May you obtain the unworthy union you desire! May your wife prove as false to you, as you have been to me! May you be followed, like Orestes, with the furies of a guilty conscience; find your error when it is too late; and die in all the horrors of despair! [*Exit.*

*Free.* There goes a woman of quality for you! what little actions! and what a great soul!——Ha! Master Spatter! where are you going?

[*To* SPATTER, *who is sneaking off.*

*Spat.* Following the Muse, sir! [*Pointing after* LADY ALTON.] But if you have any further commands, or his lordship should have occasion for me to write his epithalamium——

*Lord Fal.* Peace, wretch! sleep in a whole skin, and be thankful! I would solicit mercy myself, and have not leisure to punish you. Be gone, sir!

*Spat.* I am obliged to your lordship—This affair will make a good article for the Evening-Post to-night, however. [*Aside, and Exit.*

*Sir Wil.* How happy has this reverse of fortune made me!—But my surprise is almost equal to my joy. May we beg you, sir, [*To* FREEPORT.] to inform us how your benevolence has effected what seems almost a miracle, in my favour?

*Free.* In two words then, sir William, this happy event is chiefly owing to your old friend, the late lord Brumpton.

*Sir Wil.* Lord Brumpton!

*Free.* Yes; honest Owen there told me, that his lordship had been employed in soliciting your pardon. Did not you, Owen?

*Owen.* I did, sir.

*Free.* Upon hearing that, and perceiving the danger you were in, I went immediately to the present lord Brumpton; who is a very honest fellow, and one of the oldest acquaintance I have in the world. He, at my instance, immediately made the necessary application; and guess how agreeably we were surprised to hear that the late lord had already been successful, and that the pardon had been made out, on the very morning of the day his lordship died. Away went I, as fast as a pair of horses could carry me, to fetch it; and should certainly have prevented this last arrest, if the warrant to apprehend you, as dangerous persons, had not issued under your assumed names of William Ford and Amelia Walton, against whom the information had been laid. But, however, it has only served to prevent your running away, when the danger was over; for at present, sir William, thank Heaven and his majesty, you are a whole man again; and you have nothing to do but to make a legal appearance, and to plead the pardon I have brought you, to absolve you from all informations.

*Lord Fal.* Thou honest, excellent man! How happily have you supplied, what I failed to accomplish!

*Free.* Ay, I heard that your lordship had been busy.—You had more friends at court than one, sir William, I promise you.

*Sir Wil.* I am overwhelmed with my sudden good fortune, and am poor even in thanks. Teach me, Mr Freeport, teach me how to make some acknowledgement for your extraordinary generosity!

*Free.* I'll tell you what, sir William. Notwithstanding your daughter's pride, I took a liking to her, the moment I saw her.

*Lord Fal.* Ha! What's this!

*Free.* What's the matter, my lord?

*Lord Fal.* Nothing. Go on, sir!

*Free.* Why, then, to confess the truth, I am afraid that my benevolence, which you have all been pleased to praise so highly, had some little leaven of self-interest in it; and I was desirous to promote Amelia's happiness more ways than one.

*Lord Fal.* Then I am the veriest wretch that ever existed.—But take her, sir! for I must confess that you have deserved her by your proceedings; and that I, fool and villain that I was, have forfeited her by mine. [*Going.*

*Free.* Hold, hold! one word before you go, if you please, my lord! You may kill yourself for aught I know, but you shan't lay your death at my door, I promise you. I had a kindness for Amelia, I must confess; but, in the course of my late negotiation for sir William, hearing of your lordship's pretensions, I dropt all thoughts of her. It is a maxim with me, to do good wherever I can, but always to abstain from doing mischief.—Now, as I can't make the lady

happy myself, I would fain put her into the hands of those that can.—So, if you would oblige me, sir William, let me join these two young folks together, [*Joining their hands.*] and do you say Amen to it.

*Sir Wil.* With all my heart!—You can have no objection, Amelia? [AMELIA *bursts into tears.*

*Lord Fal.* How bitterly do those tears reproach me! It shall be the whole business of my future life to atone for them.

*Ame.* Your actions this day, and your solicitude for my father, have redeemed you in my good opinion; and the consent of sir William, seconded by so powerful an advocate as Mr Freeport, cannot be contended with. Take my hand, my lord! a virtuous passion may inhabit the purest breast; and I am not ashamed to confess, that I had conceived a partiality for you, till your own conduct turned my heart against you; and if my resentment has given you any pain, when I consider the occasion, I must own that I cannot repent it.

*Lord Fal.* Mention it no more, my love, I beseech you! You may justly blame your lover, I confess; but I will never give you cause to complain of your husband.

*Free.* I don't believe you will. I give you joy, my lord! I give you all joy! As for you, madam, [*To* AMELIA.] do but shew the world that you can bear prosperity, as well as you have sustained the shocks of adversity, and there are few women, who may not wish to be an Amelia.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

# THE

# BROTHERS.

BY

*CUMBERLAND.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### MEN.

SIR BENJAMIN DOVE, *henpecked by his wife.*
BELFIELD *sen.* } *the Brothers.*
BELFIELD *jun.* }
CAPTAIN IRONSIDES, *uncle to* BELFIELD *sen. and jun.*
SKIFF, *master of the privateer.*
PATERSON, *servant to* SIR BENJAMIN.
OLD GOODWIN, *a fisherman.*
PHILIP, *his son.*
FRANCIS, *servant to* BELFIELD *jun.*
JONATHAN, *servant to* SIR BENJAMIN.

### WOMEN.

LADY DOVE.
SOPHIA, SIR BENJAMIN'S *daughter.*
VIOLETTA, *wife to* BELFIELD *sen.*
FANNY GOODWIN.
LUCY WATERS.
KITTY, LADY DOVE'S *maid.*

*Scene—The sea coast of Cornwall.*

## ACT I.

SCENE I.—*A rocky shore, with a fisherman's cabin in the cliff: a violent tempest, with thunder and lightning: a ship discovered stranded on the coast. The characters enter, after having looked out of their cabin, as if waiting for the abatement of the storm.*

GOODWIN, PHILIP, *and* FANNY.

*Phi.* IT blows a rank storm; 'tis well, father, we hauled the boat ashore before the weather came on; she's safe bestowed, however, let what will happen.

*Good.* Ay, Philip, we had need be provident: except that poor skiff, my child, what have we left in this world that we can call our own?

*Phi.* To my thoughts, now, we live as happily in this poor hut, as we did yonder in the great house, when you was 'squire Belfield's principal tenant, and as topping a farmer as any in the whole county of Cornwall.

*Good.* Ah, child!

*Phi.* Nay, never droop; to be sure, father, the 'squire has dealt hardly with you, and a mighty point, truly, he has gained! the ruin of an honest man. If those are to be the uses of a great estate, Heaven continue me what I am!

*Fan.* Ay, ay, brother, a good conscience in a coarse drugget, is better than an aching heart in a silken gown.

*Good.* Well, children, well, if you can bear

misfortunes patiently, 'twere an ill office for me to repine; we have long tilled the earth for a subsistence; now, Philip, we must plough the ocean; in those waves lies our harvest; there, my brave lad, we have an equal inheritance with the best.

*Phi.* True, father; the sea, that feeds us, provides us an habitation here in the hollow of the cliff. I trust, the 'squire will exact no rent for this dwelling——Alas! that ever two brothers should have been so opposite as our merciless landlord, and the poor young gentleman, they say, is now dead.

*Good.* Sirrah, I charge you, name not that unhappy youth to me any more; I was endeavouring to forget him and his misfortunes, when the sight of that vessel in distress brought him afresh to my remembrance; for, it seems, he perished by sea: the more shame upon him, whose cruelty and injustice drove him thither. But come, the wind lulls apace; let us launch the boat, and make a trip to yonder vessel: if we can assist in lightening her, perhaps she may ride it out.

*Phi.* 'Tis to no purpose; the crew are coming ashore in their boat; I saw them enter the creek.

*Good.* Did you so? Then, do you and your sister step into the cabin; make a good fire, and provide such fish and other stores as you have within: I will go down, and meet them: whoever they may be, that have suffered this misfortune on our coasts, let us remember, children, never to regard any man as an enemy, who stands in need of our protection. [*Exit* GOOD.

*Phi.* I am strongly tempted to go down to the creek, too; if father should light on any mischief ——well, for once in my life, I'll disobey him; sister, you can look to matters within doors; I'll go round by the point, and be there as soon as he.

*Fan.* Do so, Philip; 'twill be best.

[*Exeunt severally.*

## SCENE II.—*Continues.*

GOODWIN *re-enters, followed by* FRANCIS, *and several sailors carrying goods and chests from the wreck.*

*Good.* This way, my friends, this way! there's stowage enough within for all your goods.

*Fran.* Come, bear a hand, my brave lads, there's no time to lose; follow that honest man, and set down your chests where he directs you.

*Sai.* Troth, I care not how soon I'm quit of mine; 'tis plaguy heavy. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE III.—*Continues.*

*Enter other Sailors.*

1*st Sai.* Here's a pretty spot of work! plague on't, what a night has this been! I thought this damned lee-shore would catch us at last.

2*d Sai.* Why, 'twas impossible to claw her off; well, there's an end of her—The Charming Sally privateer!—Poor soul; a better sea boat never swam upon the salt sea.

3*d Sai.* I knew we should have no luck after we took up that woman there from the packet that sunk along side us.

1*st Sai.* What, madam Violetta, as they call her? Why, 'tis like enough—But hush, here comes our captain's nephew; he's a brave lad, and a seaman's friend, and, between you and me [*Boatswain's whistle.*]—But hark, we are called —Come along! [*Exeunt Sailors.*

## SCENE IV.

BELFIELD *jun. and* FRANCIS.

*Bel. jun.* That ever fortune should cast us upon this coast!—Francis!

*Fran.* Sir!

*Bel. jun.* Have the people landed those chests we brought off with us in the boat?

*Fran.* They have, sir; an old fisherman, whom we met, has shewn us here to a cavern in the cliff, where we have stowed them all in safety.

*Bel. jun.* That's well. Where's my uncle?

*Fran.* On board; no persuasions can prevail on him to quit the ship, which, he swears, will lift with the tide; his old crony, the master, is with him, and they ply the casks so briskly, that it seems a moot point, which fills the fastest, they, or the wreck.

*Bel. jun.* Strange insensibility! but you must bring him off by force, then, if there is no other way of saving him. I think, on my conscience, he is as indifferent to danger as the plank he treads on. We are now thrown upon my unnatural brother's estate; that house, Francis, which you see to the left, is his; and what may be the consequence if he and my uncle should meet, I know not; for such has been captain Ironsides' resentment on my account, that he has declared war against the very name of Belfield; and, in one of his whimsical passions, you know, insisted on my laying it aside for ever; so that hitherto I have been known on board by no other name than that of Lewson.

*Fran.* 'Tis true, sir; and, I think, 'twill be adviseable to continue the disguise as long as you can. As for the old captain, from the life he always leads on shore, and his impatience to get on board again, I think, 'tis very possible an interview between him and your brother may be prevented.

*Bel. jun.* I think so, too. Go then, Francis, and conduct the old gentleman hither; I see Violetta coming. [*Exit* FRAN.

Sure there is something in that woman's story uncommonly mysterious—Of English parents—born in Lisbon—her family and fortune buried in the earthquake—so much she freely tells; but more, I am convinced, remains untold, and of a melancholy sort: she has once or twice, as I

thought, seemed disposed to unbosom herself to me; but it is so painful to be told of sorrows one has not power to relieve, that I have hitherto avoided the discourse.

*Enter* VIOLETTA.

*Bel. jun.* Well, madam, melancholy still? still that face of sorrow and despair? twice shipwrecked, and twice rescued from the jaws of death, do you regret your preservation? and have I incurred your displeasure, by prolonging your existence?

*Vio.* Not so, Mr Lewson; such ingratitude be far from me. Can I forget, when the vessel, in which I had sailed from Portugal, foundered by your side, with what noble, what benevolent ardour, you flew to my assistance? Regardful only of my safety, your own seemed no part of your care.

*Bel. jun.* Oh! no more of this; the preservation of a fellow-creature is as natural as self-defence. You now, for the first time in your life, breathe the air of England—a rough reception it has given you; but be not, therefore, discouraged; our hearts, Violetta, are more accessible than our shores; nor can you find inhospitality in Britain, save in our climate only.

*Vio.* These characteristics of the English may be just. I take my estimate from a less favourable example.

*Bel. jun.* Villainy, madam, is the growth of every soul; nor can I, while yonder habitation is in my view, forget, that England has given birth to monsters that disgrace humanity; but this I will say for my countrymen, that, where you can point out one rascal with a heart to wrong you, I will produce fifty honest fellows ready and resolute to redress you.

*Vio.* Ah!—But on what part of the English coast is it that we are landed?

*Bel. jun.* On the coast of Cornwall.

*Vio.* Of Cornwall is it? You seem to know the owner of that house: are you well acquainted with the country hereabouts?

*Bel. jun.* Intimately; it has been the cradle of my infancy, and, with little interruption, my residence ever since.

*Vio.* You are amongst your friends, then, no doubt; how fortunate is it, that you will have their consolation and assistance in your distress.

*Bel. jun.* Madam———

*Vio.* Every moment will bring them down to the very shores; this brave, humane, this hospitable people, will flock, in crowds, to your relief; your friends, Mr Lewson—

*Bel. jun.* My friends, Violetta! must I confess it to you, I have no friends——those rocks, that have thus scattered my treasures, those waves, that have devoured them, to me are not so fatal, as hath been that man, whom Nature meant to be my nearest friend.

*Vio.* What, and are you a fellow-sufferer, then? Is this the way you reconcile me to your nation? Are these the friends of human kind? Why don't we fly from this ungenerous, this ungrateful country?

*Bel. jun.* Hold, madam! one villain, however base, can no more involve a whole nation in his crimes, than one example, however dignified, can inspire it with his virtues: thank Heaven, the worthless owner of that mansion is yet without a rival.

*Vio.* You have twice directed my attention to that house; 'tis a lovely spot; what pity that so delicious a retirement should be made the residence of so undeserving a being!

*Bel. jun.* It is, indeed, a charming place, and was once the seat of hospitality and honour; but, its present possessor, Andrew Belfield——Madam, for Heaven's sake, what ails you? you seem suddenly disordered——Have I said——

*Vio.* No, 'tis nothing; don't regard me, Mr Lewson. I am weak, and subject to these surprizes; I shall be glad, however, to retire.

*Bel. jun.* A little repose, I hope, will relieve you; within this hut, some accommodation may be found: lean on my arm.

[*Leads her to the door of the cabin.*

*Enter* GOODWIN.

*Good.* Heaven defend me! do my eyes deceive me? 'tis wondrous like his shape, his air, his look——

*Bel. jun.* What is your astonishment, friend? Do you know me? If it was not for that habit, I should say your name is Goodwin.

*Good.* 'Tis he! he is alive! my dear young master, Mr Belfield! Yes, sir, my name is Goodwin: however changed my appearance, my heart is still the same, and overflows with joy at this unexpected meeting.

*Bel. jun.* Give me thy hand, my old, my honest friend; and is this sorry hole thy habitation?

*Good.* It is.

*Bel. jun.* The world, I see, has frowned on thee since we parted.

*Good.* Yes, sir: but what are my misfortunes? you must have undergone innumerable hardships; and now, at last, shipwrecked on your own coast! Well, but your vessel is not totally lost, and we will work night and day in saving your effects.

*Bel. jun.* Oh, as for that, the sea gave all, let it take back a part; I have enough on shore not to envy my brother his fortune. But there is one blessing, master Goodwin, I own I should grudge him the possession of—There was a young lady———

*Good.* What, sir, have not you forgot Miss Sophia?

*Bel. jun.* Forgot her! my heart trembles while I ask you, if she is indeed, as you call her, Miss Sophia.

*Good.* She is yet unmarried, though every day we expect——

*Bel. jun.* 'Tis enough; Fortune, I acquit thee! Happy be the winds that threw me on this coast, and blest the rocks that received me! Let my vessel go to pieces; she has done her part in bearing me hither, while I can cast myself at the feet of my Sophia, recount to her my unabating passion, and have one fair struggle for her heart. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE V.

*Enter* VIOLETTA.

*Vio.* Once more I am alone. How my heart sunk, when Lewson pronounced the name of Belfield! it must be he, it must be my false, cruel, yet (spite of all my wrongs) beloved husband: yes, there he lives, each circumstance confirms it; Cornwall, the county; here the sea-coast, and these white craggy cliffs; there the disposition of his seat; the grove, lake, lawn; every feature of the landscape tallies with the descriptions he has given me of it. What shall I do, and to whom shall I complain? when Lewson spoke of him, it was with a bitterness that shocked me; I will not disclose myself to him; by what fell from him, I suspect he is related to Mr Belfield—But, hush! I talk to these rocks, and forget that they have ears.

*Enter* FANNY.

*Fan.* Are you better, madam? Is the air of any service to you?

*Vio.* I am much relieved by it: the beauty of that place attracted my attention, and, if you please, we will walk further up the hill to take a nearer view of it. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE VI.

*Part of the crew enter, with* IRONSIDES *and* SKIFF *in the midst of them.*

*Omnes.* Huzza! huzza! huzza!

1*st Sai.* Long life to your honour! welcome ashore, noble captain!

2*d Sai.* Avast there, Jack; stand clear, and let his old honour pass. Bless his heart, he looks cheerly howsomever; let the world wag as it will, he'll never flinch.

3*d Sai.* Not he! he's true English oak to the heart of him; and a fine old seaman-like figure he is.

*Iron.* Ah, messmates, we are all aground; I have been taking a parting cup with the Charming Sally——She's gone; but the stoutest bark must have an end; master, here, and I, did all we could to lighten her; we took leave of her in an officer-like manner.

1*st Sai.* Hang sorrow! we know the worst on't; 'tis only taking a fresh cruize; and for my part, I'll sail with captain Ironsides as far as there's water to carry me.

*Omnes.* So we will all.

*Iron.* Say ye so, my hearts? if the wind sits that way, hoist sail, say I; old George will make one amongst you, if that be all; I hate an idle life——So, so; away to your work; to-morrow we'll make a day on't. [*Exeunt Sailors.*

*Iron.* Skiff!

*Skiff.* Here, your honour!

*Iron.* I told you, Skiff, how 'twould be; if you had luffed up in time, as I would have had you, and not made so free with the land, this mishap had never come to pass.

*Skiff.* Lord love you, captain Ironsides! 'twas a barrel of beef to a biscuit, the wind had not shifted so direct contrary as it did; who could have thought it?

*Iron.* Why, I could have thought it; every body could have thought it: do you consider whereabouts you are, mun? Upon the coast of England, as I take it. Every thing here goes contrary both by sea and land——Every thing whips, and chops, and changes about, like mad, in this country; and the people, I think, are as full of vagaries as the climate.

*Skiff.* Well, I could have swore———

*Iron.* Ay, so you could, Skiff; and so you did, pretty roundly, too; but for the good you did by it, you might as well have puffed a whiff of tobacco in the wind's face.

*Skiff.* Well, captain; though we have lost our ship, we haven't lost our all: thank the fates, we've saved treasure enough to make all our fortunes notwithstanding.

*Iron.* Fortunes, quotha? What have two such old weather-beaten fellows, as thee and I are, to do with fortune; or, indeed, what has fortune to do with us? Flip and tobacco is the only luxury we have any relish for: had we fine houses, could we live in them? a greasy hammock has been our birth for these fifty years; fine horses, could we ride them? and, as for the fair sex, there, that my nephew makes such a pother about, I don't know what thou may'st think of the matter, Skiff; but, for my own part, I should not care if there were no such animals in the creation.

*Enter* BELFIELD, *jun.*

*Bel. jun.* Uncle, what chear, man?

*Iron.* Oh, Bob! is it thee? whither bound now, my dear boy?

*Bel. jun.* Why, how can you ask such a question? We have landed our treasure; saved all our friends, and set foot upon English ground, and what business, think you, can a young fellow, like me, have, but one?

*Iron.* Pshaw, you are a fool, Bob; these wenches will be the undoing of you—a plague of them altogether say I: what are they good for, but to spoil company, and keep brave fellows

from their duty? O' my conscience, they do more mischief to the king's navy in one twelvemonth, than the French have done in ten; a pack of—but I ha' done with them; thank the stars I ha' fairly washed my hands of 'em! I ha' nothing to say to none of 'em.

*Skiff.* Mercy be good unto us! that my wife could but hear your worship talk.

*Bel. jun.* Oh, my dear uncle!———

*Iron.* But I'll veer away no more good advice after you; so even drive as you will under your petticoat-sails; black, brown, fair, or tawny, 'tis all fish that comes in your net: Why, where's your reason, Bob, all this here while? Where's your religion, and be damned to you?

*Bel. jun.* Come, come, my dear uncle, a truce to your philosophy. Go, throw your dollars into yonder ocean, and bribe the tempest to be still; you shall as soon reverse the operations of nature, as wean my heart from my Sophia.

*Iron.* Hold, hold! take me right; if, by Sophia, you mean the daughter of sir Benjamin Dove, I don't care if I make one with you;—what say'st thou, boy? shall it be so?

*Bel. jun.* So, then, you think there may be one good woman, however?

*Iron.* Just as I think there may be one honest Dutchman, one sober German, or one righteous methodist. Look'e, Bob, so I do but keep single, I have no objection to other people's marrying; but, on these occasions, I would manage myself as I would my ship; not by running her into every odd creek and cranny, in the smuggling fashion, as if I had no good credentials to produce; but, play fairly, and in sight, d'ye see; and whenever a safe harbour opens, stand boldly in, boy, and lay her up snug, in a good birth, once for all.

*Bel. jun.* Come, then, uncle, let us about it; and you may greatly favour my enterprize, since you can keep the father and mother in play, while I———

*Iron.* Avast, young man! avast! the father, if you please, without the mother; sir Benjamin's a passable good companion, for a landman; but for my lady———I'll have nothing to say to my lady; she's his wife, thank the stars, and not mine.

*Bel. jun.* Be it as you will; I shall be glad of your company on any terms.

*Iron.* Say no more, then. About ship; if you are bound for that port, I'm your mate:—master, look to the wreck; I'm for a fresh cruize.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT II.

SCENE I.——*The outside of* SIR BENJAMIN DOVE'S *house.*

*Enter* BELFIELD, *sen. and* LUCY WATERS.

*Lucy.* WHAT, don't I know you? haven't you been to me of all mankind the basest?

*Bel. sen.* Not yet, Lucy.

*Lucy.* Sure, Mr Belfield, you won't pretend to deny it to my face.

*Bel. sen.* To thy face, child, I will not pretend that I can deny any thing; you are much too handsome to be contradicted.

*Lucy.* Pish!

*Bel. sen.* So! so!

*Lucy.* Haven't you, faithless as you are, promised me marriage over and over again?

*Bel. sen.* Repeatedly.

*Lucy.* And you have now engaged yourself to the daughter of sir Benjamin Dove, have you not?

*Bel. sen.* Assuredly.

*Lucy.* Let me demand of you, then, Mr Belfield, since you had no honourable designs towards me yourself, why you prevented those of an humbler lover, young Philip, the son of your late tenant, poor Goodwin?

*Bel. sen.* For the very reason you state in your question; because I had no honourable designs, and he had: you disappointed my hopes, and I was resolved to defeat his.

*Lucy.* And this you thought reason sufficient to expel his father from your farm; to persecute him and his innocent family, till you had accomplished their ruin, and driven them to the very brink of the ocean for their habitation and subsistence?

*Bel. sen.* Your questions, Miss Lucy, begin to be impertinent.

*Lucy.* Oh, do they touch you, sir? but I'll waste no more time with you; my business is with your Sophia. Here, in the very spot which you hope to make the scene of your guilty triumphs, will I expose you to her; set forth your inhuman conduct to your unhappy brother; and detect the mean artifices you have been driven to, in order to displace him in her affections.

*Bel. sen.* You will?

*Lucy.* I will, be assured; so let them pass.

*Bel. sen.* Stay, Lucy; understand yourself a little better. Didn't you pretend to Sophia, that my brother paid his addresses to you; that he had pledged himself to marry you; nay, that he had———

*Lucy.* Hold, Mr Belfield, nor further explain a transaction, which, though it reflects shame enough upon me, that was your instrument, ought to cover you, who was principal in the crime, with treble confusion and remorse.

*Bel. sen.* True, child; it was rather a disreputable transaction; and 'tis, therefore, fit no part of it should rest with me: I shall disavow it altogether.

*Lucy.* Incredible confidence!

*Bel. sen.* We shall see who will meet most belief in the world; you or I. Choose, therefore, your part: if you betray it, you have me for an enemy; and a fatal one you shall find me.—— Now, enter, if you think fit; there lies your way to Sophia. [*She goes into the house.*] So! how am I to parry this blow? what plea shall I use with Sophia? 'twas the ardour of my love—any thing will find pardon with a woman, that conveys flattery to her charms. After all, if the worst should happen, and I be defeated in this match, so shall I be saved from doing that, which, when done, 'tis probable I may repent of; and I have some intimation from within, which tells me that it will be so: I perceive that, in this life, he, who is checked by the rubs of compunction, can never arrive at the summit of prosperity.

*Enter* PATERSON.

*Pat.* What, melancholy, Mr Belfield! So near your happiness, and so full of thought?

*Bel. sen.* Happiness! what's that?

*Pat.* I'll tell you, sir; the possession of a lovely girl, with fifty thousand pounds in her lap, and twice fifty thousand virtues in her mind; this I call happiness, as much as mortal man can merit: and this, as I take it, you are destined to enjoy.

*Bel. sen.* That is not so certain, Mr Paterson. Would you believe it, that perverse hussy, Lucy Waters, who left me but this minute, threatens to transverse all my hopes, and is gone this instant to Sophia with that resolution?

*Pat.* Impossible! how is Miss Waters provided or provoked to do this!

*Bel. sen.* Why, 'tis a foolish story, and scarce worth relating to you; but you know, when your letters called me home from Portugal, I found my younger brother in close attendance on Miss Dove; and, indeed, such good use had the fellow made of his time in my absence, that I found it impossible to counterwork his operations by fair and open approaches; so, to make short of the story, I took this girl, Lucy Waters, into partnership; and, by a happy device, ruined him with Sophia.

*Pat.* This, Mr Belfield, I neither know, nor wish to know.

*Bel. sen.* Let it pass, then. Defeated in these views, my brother, as you know, betook himself to the desperate course of privateering, with that old tar-barrel, my uncle: what may have been his fate, I know not, but I have found it convenient to propagate a report of his death.

*Pat.* I am sorry for it, Mr Belford: I wish nothing was convenient, that can be thought dishonourable.

*Bel. sen.* Nature, Mr Paterson, never put into a human composition more candour and credulity than she did into mine; but acquaintance with life has shewn me how impracticable these principles are. To live with mankind, we must live like mankind: was it a world of honesty, I should blush to be a man of art.

*Pat.* And do you dream of ever reaching your journey's end by such crooked paths as these are?

*Bel. sen.* And yet, my most sage moralist, wonderful as it may seem to thee, true it is, notwithstanding, that, after having threaded all these by-ways and crooked allies, which thy right-lined apprehension knows nothing of; after having driven my rival from the field, and being almost in possession of the spoil, still I feel a repugnance in me that almost tempts me to renounce my good fortune, and abandon a victory I have struggled so hard to obtain.

*Pat.* I guessed as much; 'tis your Violetta; 'tis your fair Portuguese, that counterworks your good fortune; and I must own to you, it was principally to save you from that improvident attachment, that I wrote so pressingly for your return; but though I have got your body in safe holding, your heart is still at Lisbon; and if you marry Miss Dove, 'tis because Violetta's fortune was demolished by the earthquake; and sir Benjamin's stands safe upon terra firma.

*Bel. sen.* Prithee, Paterson, don't be too hard upon me: sure you don't suspect that I am married to Violetta?

*Pat.* Married to Violetta! Now you grow much too serious, and 'tis time to put an end to the discourse. [*Exit.*

*Bel. sen.* And you grow much too quick-sighted, Mr Paterson, for my acquaintance. I think he does not quite suspect me of double dealing in this business; and yet I have my doubts; his reply to my question was equivocal, and his departure abrupt—I know not what to think—This I know, that Love is a deity, and Avarice a devil; that Violetta is my lawful wife; and that Andrew Belfield is a villain. [*Exit.*

## SCENE II.

PATERSON *passes over the stage.*

*Pat.* All abroad this fine day—not a creature within doors.

*Enter* KITTY.

*Kitty.* Mr Paterson! hist, Mr Paterson! a word in your ear, sweet sir.

*Pat.* Curse on't, she has caught me—Well, Mrs Kitty?

*Kitty.* Why, I have been hunting you all the house over; my lady's impatient to see you.

*Pat.* Oh, I'm my lady Dove's most obedient servant—And what are her ladyship's commands, pray?

*Kitty.* Fy, Mr Paterson! how should I know what her ladyship wants with you? but a secret it is, no doubt, for she desires you to come to her

immediately in the garden, at the bottom of the yew-tree walk, next the warren.

*Pat.* The devil she does!——What a pity it is, Mrs Kitty, we can't cure your lady of this turn for solitude. I wish you would go with me; your company, probably, will divert her from her contemplations: besides, I shall certainly mistake the place.

*Kitty.* I go with you, Mr Paterson! a fine thing truly: I'd have you to know, that my character is not to be trusted with young fellows in yew-tree walks, whatever my lady may think of the matter—Besides, I've an assignation in another place. [*Exit.*

*Pat.* What a devilish dilemma am I in! Why this is a peremptory assignation—Certain it is, there are some ladies that no wise man should be commonly civil to——Here have I been flattering myself that I was stroaking a termagant into humour, and all the while have been betraying a tender victim into love. Love, love, did I say? her ladyship's passion is a disgrace to the name—But what shall I do?—'tis a pitiful thing to run away from a victory; but 'tis frequently the case in precipitate successes; we conquer more than we have wit to keep, or ability to enjoy. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to the yew-tree walk.*

*Enter* BELFIELD *junior.*

*Bel. jun.* Now, could I but meet my Sophia!—Where can she have hid herself?—Hush; lady Dove, as I live!

*Enter* LADY DOVE.

*Lady Dove.* So, Mr Paterson, you're a pretty gentleman, to keep a lady waiting here! Why, how you stand?—Come, come, I shall expect a very handsome atonement for this indecorum—Why, what, let me look——Ah! who have we here?

*Bel. jun.* A man, madam; and though not your man, yet one as honest, and as secret: come, come, my lady, I'm no tell-tale; be you but grateful, this goes no further.

*Lady Dove.* Lost and undone! young Belfield!

*Bel. jun.* The same; but be not alarmed; we both have our secrets; I am, like you, a votary to love: favour but my virtuous passion for Miss Dove, and take you your Paterson; I shall be silent as the grave.

*Lady Dove.* Humph!

*Bel. jun.* Nay, never hesitate; my brother, I know, had your wishes: but wherein has nature favoured him more than me? And, since fortune has now made my scale as heavy as his, why should you partially direct the beam?

*Lady Dove.* Well, if it is so, and that you promise not to betray me——But this accident has so discomposed me (plague on't, say I), don't press me any further, at present; I must leave you; remember the condition of our agreement, and expect my friendship——Oh, I could tear your eyes out! [*Exit.*

*Bel. jun.* Well, sir Benjamin, keep your own counsel, if you are wise; I'll do as I would be done by. Had I such a wife as lady Dove, I should be very happy to have such a friend as Mr Paterson. [*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

*Enter* SOPHIA DOVE, *and* LUCY WATERS.

*Lucy.* If there is faith in woman, I have seen young Belfield; I have beheld his apparition; for what else could it be?

*Sophia.* How? when? where? I shall faint with surprise.

*Lucy.* As I crossed the yew-tree walk, I saw him pass by the head of the canal, towards the house. Alas! poor youth, the injuries I have done him have called him from his grave.

*Sophia.* Injuries, Miss Waters! what injuries have you done him? Tell me; for therein, perhaps, I may be concerned.

*Lucy.* Deeply concerned you are; with the most penitent remorse I confess it to you, that his affections to you were pure, honest, and sincere. Yes, amiable Sophia, you was unrivalled in his esteem; and I, who persuaded you to the contrary, am the basest, the falsest of womankind; every syllable I told you of his engagements to me, was a malicious invention: how could you be so blind to your own superiority, to give credit to the imposition, and suffer him to depart without an explanation? Oh, that villain, that villain, his brother, has undone us all!

*Sophia.* Villain, do you call him? Whither would you transport my imagination? You hurry me with such rapidity from one surprise to another, that I know not where to fix, how to act, or what to believe.

*Lucy.* Oh, madam! he is a villain, a most accomplished one; and, if I can but snatch you from the snare he has spread for you, I hope it will, in some measure, atone for the injuries I have done to you, and to that unhappy youth, who now——O Heavens! I see him again! he comes this way! I cannot endure his sight! alive or dead, I must avoid him. [*Runs out.*

*Enter* BELFIELD *junior.*

*Bel. jun.* Adorable Sophia! this transport overpays my labours.

*Sophia.* Sir! Mr Belfield, is it you? Oh, support me!———

*Bel. jun.* With my life, thou loveliest of women! Behold your poor adventurer is returned; happy past compute, if his fate is not indifferent to you; rich beyond measure, if his safety is worthy your concern.

*Sophia.* Release me, I beseech you: what have

I done! Sure you are too generous to take any advantage of my confusion.

*Bel. jun.* Pardon me, my Sophia! the advantages I take from your confusion are not to be purchased by the riches of the east: I would not forego the transport of holding you one minute in my arms, for all that wealth and greatness have to give.

LADY DOVE *enters, while* BELFIELD *junior is kneeling, and embracing* SOPHIA.

*Lady Dove.* Hey-day! what's here to do with you both?

*Sophia.* Ah!——— [*Shrieks.*

*Bel. jun.* Confusion! Lady Dove here?

*Lady Dove.* Yes, sir; lady Dove is here; and will take care you shall have no more garden-dialogues. On your knees, too!——The fellow was not half so civil to me. [*Aside.*]——Ridiculous! a poor beggarly swabber truly!——As for you, Mrs———

*Bel. jun.* Hold, madam! as much of your fury and foul language as you please upon me; but not one hard word against that lady, or by Heavens!———

*Lady Dove.* Come, sir, none of your reprobate swearing; none of your sea-noises here. I would my first husband was alive! I would he was, for your sake! I am surprised, Miss Dove, you have no more regard for your reputation; a delicate swain truly you have chosen; just thrown ashore from the pitchy bowels of a shipwrecked privateer! Go, go; get you in; for shame! your father shall know of these goings on, depend on't:—— as for you, sir—— [*Exit* SOPHIA.

*Bel. jun.* [*Stopping* LADY DOVE.] A word with you, madam! Is this fair dealing? What would you have said, if I had broke in thus upon you and Mr Paterson?

*Lady Dove.* Mr Paterson! why, you rave; what is it you mean?

*Bel. jun.* Come, come, this is too ridiculous; you know your reputation is in my keeping; call to mind what passed between us a while ago, and the engagement you are under on that account.

*Lady Dove.* Ha, ha, ha!

*Bel. jun.* Very well, truly; and you think to brave this matter out, do you?

*Lady Dove.* Most assuredly; and shall make sir Benjamin call you to account, if you dare to breathe a word against my reputation: incorrigible coxcomb! to think I would keep any terms with you after such an event. Take my word for it, Belfield, you are come home no wiser than you went out; you missed the only advantage you might have taken of that rencounter, and now I set you at defiance: take heed to what you say, or look to hear from sir Benjamin.

*Bel. jun.* Oh, no doubt on't: how can sir Benjamin avoid fighting for your sake, when your ladyship has so liberally equipped him with weapons? [*Exeunt severally.*

## SCENE V.—*A hall.*

*Enter* JONATHAN *and* FRANCIS.

*Jon.* And so, sir, 'tis just as I tell you; every thing in this family goes according to the will of the lady: for my own part, I am one of those that hate trouble; I swim with the stream, and make my place as easy as I can.

*Fran.* Your looks, Mr Jonathan, convince me that you live at your ease.

*Jon.* I do so; and therefore, (in spite of the old proverb, "Like master, like man,") you never saw two people more different than I and sir Benjamin Dove. He, Lord help him! is a little peaking, puling thing! I am a jolly, portable man, as you see. It so happened, that we both became widowers at the same time; I knew when I was well, and have continued single ever since. He fell into the clutches of—Hark, sure I hear my lady——

*Fran.* No, it was nothing. When did the poor gentleman light upon this termagant?

*Jon.* Lackaday! 'twas here at the borough of Knavestown, when master had the great contest with 'squire Belfield, about three years ago: her first husband, Mr Searcher, was a king's messenger, as they call it, and came down express from a great man about court during the poll; he caught a surfeit, as ill luck would have it, at the election-dinner; and, before he died, his wife, that's now my lady, came down to see him; then it was master fell in love with her: egad, 'twas the unluckiest job of all his life.

*Sir Ben.* [*Calls without.*] Jonathan! why, Jonathan!

*Fran.* Hark, you are called.

*Jon.* Ay, ay; 'tis only my master; my lady tells the servants not to mind what sir Benjamin says, and I love to do as I am bid.

*Fran.* Well, honest Jonathan, if you won't move, I must; by this time I hope my young master is happy with your young mistress.

[*Exit* FRANCIS.

*Enter* SIR BENJAMIN DOVE.

*Sir Ben.* Why, Jonathan, I say? Oh, are you here? Why cou'dn't you come when I called you?

*Jon.* Lackaday, sir! you don't consider how much easier it is for you to call, than for me to come.

*Sir Ben.* I think, honest Jonathan, when I first knew you, you was a parish orphan; I 'prenticed you out; you run away from your master; I took you into my family; you married; I set you up in a farm of my own; stocked it; you paid me no rent; I received you again into my service, or rather, I should say, my lady's—— Are these things so, or does my memory fail me, Jonathan?

*Jon.* Why, to be sure, I partly remember somewhat of what your worship mentions.

*Sir Ben* If you partly remember all this, Jonathan, don't entirely forget to come when I call.

*Iron.* [*Without.*] Hoy there! within! what! nobody stirring? all hands asleep? all under the hatches?

*Sir Ben.* Hey-day, who the dickens have we got here? Old captain Ironsides, as I am a sinner! who could have thought of this? Run to the door, good Jonathan—nay, hold; there's no escaping now:—what will become of me!—he'll ruin every thing; and throw the whole house into confusion.

*Iron.* [*Entering.*] What, sir Ben! my little knight of Malta! give me a buss, my boy. Hold, hold! sure I'm out of my reckoning: let me look a little nearer; why, what mishap has befallen you, that you heave out these signals of distress?

*Sir Ben.* I'm heartily glad to see thee, my old friend; but a truce to your sea-phrases, for I don't understand them: what signals of distress have I about me?

*Iron.* Why that white flag there at your main top-mast head: in plain English, what dost do with that clout about thy pate?

*Sir Ben.* Clout, do you call it? 'Tis a little *en dishabille*, indeed; but there's nothing extraordinary, I take it, in a man's wearing his gown and cap in a morning; 'tis the dress I usually chuse to study in.

*Iron.* And this hall is your library, is it? Ah! my old friend, my old friend! But, come, I want to have a little chat with you, and thought to have dropt in at pudding-time, as they say; for though it may be morning with thee, sir Ben, 'tis mid-day with the rest of the world.

*Sir Ben.* Indeed! is it so late?—But I was fallen upon an agreeable *tête à tête* with lady Dove, and hardly knew how the time passed.

*Iron.* Come, come; 'tis very clear how your time has passed—but what occasion is there for this fellow's being privy to our conversation?—Why don't the lubber stir? What does the fat, lazy oaf stand staring at?

*Sir Ben.* What shall I say now? Was ever any thing so distressing!——Why that's Jonathan, captain; don't you remember your old friend, Jonathan?

*Jon.* I hope your honour's in good health; I'm glad to see your honour come home again.

*Iron.* Honest Jonathan, I came to visit your master, and not you; if you'll go and hasten dinner, and bring sir Benjamin his periwig and clothes, you'll do me a very acceptable piece of service; for, to tell you the truth, my friend, I haven't had a comfortable meal of fresh provision this many a day.

[*Exit* JONATHAN.

*Sir Ben.* 'Foregad, you're come to the wrong house to find one. [*Aside.*

*Iron.* And so, sir knight, knowing I was welcome, and having met with a mishap here, upon your coast, I am come to taste your good cheer, and pass an evening with you over a tiff of punch.

*Sir Ben.* The devil you are! [*Aside.*]——This is very kind of you: there is no man in England, captain Ironsides, better pleased to see his friends about him than I am.

*Iron.* Ay, ay; if I did'nt think I was welcome, I shou'dn't ha' come.

*Sir Ben.* You may be assured you are welcome.

*Iron.* I am assured.

*Sir Ben.* You are, by my soul! take my word for it, you are.

*Iron.* Well, well; what need of all this ceremony about a meal's meat? who doubts you?

*Sir Ben.* You need not doubt me, believe it—I'll only step out, and ask my lady what time she ordered dinner; or whether she has made any engagement I'm not apprized of.

*Iron.* No, no; engagement! how can that be, and you in this pickle? Come, come, sit down; dinner won't come the quicker for your inquiry: and now tell me, how does my god-daughter Sophia?

*Sir Ben.* Thank you heartily, captain, my daughter's well in health.

*Iron.* That's well; and how fares your fine new wife? How goes on matrimony? Fond as ever, my little amorous Dove? always billing, always cooing?

*Sir Ben.* No, captain, no; we are totally altered in that respect; we shew no fondness now before company; my lady is so delicate in that particular, that from the little notice she takes of me in public, you would scarce believe we were man and wife.

*Iron.* Ha, ha, ha! why 'tis the very circumstance that would confirm it; but I'm glad to hear it: for, of all things under the sun, I most nauseate your nuptial familiarities; and, though you remember I was fool enough to dissuade you from this match, I am rejoiced to hear you manage so well and so wisely.

*Sir Ben.* No man happier in this life, captain! no man happier! one thing only is wanting; had the kind stars but crowned our endearments———

*Iron.* What, my lady don't breed, then?

*Sir Ben.* Hush, hush! for Heaven's sake don't speak so loud! should my lady overhear you, it might put strange things into her head; oh! she is a lady of delicate spirits, tender nerves—quite weak and tender nerves—a small matter throws her down—gentle as a lamb—starts at a straw—speak loud, and it destroys her: Oh! my friend, you are not used to deal with women's constitutions—these hypochondriac cases require a deal of management—'tis but charity to humour them; and you cannot think what pains it requires to keep them always quiet and in temper!

*Iron.* Ay, like enough—but here comes my lady, and in excellent temper, if her looks don't belie her.

*Enter* LADY DOVE.

*Lady Dove.* What's to do now, sir Benjamin? What's the matter that you send for your clothes? Can't you be contented to remain as you are? Your present dress is well enough to stay at home in, and I don't know that you have any call out of doors.

*Iron.* Gentle as a lamb, sir Benjamin!

*Sir Ben.* This attention of yours, my dear, is beyond measure flattering! I am infinitely beholden to you; but you are so taken up with your concern on my account, that you overlook our old friend and neighbour, captain Ironsides.

*Lady Dove.* Sir Benjamin, you make yourself quite ridiculous: this folly is not to be endured; you are enough to tire the patience of any woman living.

*Sir Ben.* She's quite discomposed; all in a flutter for fear I should take cold by changing my dress.

*Iron.* Yes, I perceive she has exceeding weak nerves. You are much in the right to humour her.

*Lady Dove.* Sir Benjamin Dove, if you mean that I should stay a minute longer in this house, I insist upon your turning that old porpoise out of it: is it not enough to bring your nauseous sea companions within these doors, but must I be compelled to entertain them? Foh! I shan't get the scent of his tar-jacket out of my nostrils this fortnight.

*Sir Ben.* Hush, my dear lady Dove! for Heaven's sake, don't shame and expose me in this manner! how can I possibly turn an honest gentleman out of my doors, who has given me no offence in life?

*Lady Dove.* Marry, but he has though, and great offence, too. I tell you, sir Benjamin, you are made a fool of.

*Sir Ben.* Nay, now, my dear sweet love! be composed.

*Lady Dove.* Yes, forsooth, and let a young, rambling, raking prodigal, run away with your daughter!

*Sir Ben.* How, what!

*Lady Dove.* A fine thing, truly, to be composed——

*Iron.* Who is it your ladyship suspects of such a design?

*Lady Dove.* Who, sir? why, who but your nephew Robert? You flattered us with a false hope he was dead; but, to our sorrow, we find him alive, and returned; and now you are cajoling this poor, simple, unthinking man, while your wild Indian, your savage there, is making off with his daughter.

*Sir Ben.* Mercy on us! what am I to think of all this?

*Iron.* What are you to think! Why, that it is a lie—that you are an ass—and that your wife is a termagant. My nephew is a lad of honour, and scorns to run away with any man's daughter, or wife either, though, I think, there's little danger of that here—As for me, sooner than mess with such a vixen, I'd starve: and so, sir Benjamin, I wish you a good stomach to your dinner.

[*Exit* IRONSIDES.

*Lady Dove.* Insolent, unmannerly brute! was ever the like heard? And you to stand tamely by! I declare I've a great mind to raise the servants upon him, since I have no other defenders. Thus am I for ever treated by your scurvy companions!

*Sir Ben.* Be pacified, my dear! am I in fault? But for Heaven's sake, what is become of my daughter?

*Lady Dove.* Yes, you can think of your daughter; but she is safe enough for this turn; I have taken care of her for one while, and thus I am rewarded for it. Am I a vixen? am I a termagant? Oh, had my first husband, had my poor, dear, dead Mr Searcher heard such a word, he would have rattled him—But he—What do I talk of? he was a man! yes, yes, he was, indeed, a man—As for you———

*Sir Ben.* Strain the comparison no farther, lady Dove; there are particulars, I dare say, in which I fall short of Mr Searcher.

*Lady Dove.* Short of him! I tell you what, sir Benjamin; I valued more the dear grey-hound that hung at his button-hole, more than I do all the foolish trinkets your vanity has lavished on me.

*Sir Ben.* Your ladyship, doubtless, was the paragon of wives: I well remember, when the poor man laid ill at my borough of Knavestown, how you came flying on the wings of love, by the Exeter waggon, to visit him before he died.

*Lady Dove.* I understand your sneer, sir, and despise it: there is one condition only, upon which you may regain my forfeited opinion.—Young Belfield, who, with this old fellow, has designs in hand of a dangerous nature, has treated me with an indignity still greater than what you have now been a witness to. Shew yourself a man upon this occasion, sir Benjamin.

*Sir Ben.* Any thing, dearest, for peace sake.

*Lady Dove.* Peace sake! It is war, and not peace, which I require—But come, if you will walk this way, I'll lay the matter open to you.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.—*The sea-shore before* GOODWIN'S *cabin.*

*Enter* VIOLETTA *and* FANNY.

*Vio.* AND when is this great match of Mr Belfield's to be?

*Fanny.* Alas, madam! we look to hear of it every day.

*Vio.* You seem to consider this event, child, as a misfortune to yourself: however others may be affected by Mr Belfield's marrying Miss Dove, to you I conceive it must be matter of indifference.

*Fanny.* I have been taught, madam, to consider no event as matter of indifference to me, by which good people are made unhappy.——— Miss Sophy is the best young lady living; Mr Belfield is———

*Vio.* Hold, Fanny! do step into the house; in my writing-box you will find a letter sealed, but without a direction; bring it to me. [*Exit* FANNY.] I have been writing to this base man, for I want fortitude to support an interview. What if I unbosomed myself to this girl, and entrusted the letter to her conveyance? She seems exceedingly honest, and, for one of so mean a condition, uncommonly sensible; I think I may safely confide in her. Well, Fanny!

*Enter* FANNY.

*Fanny.* Here is your letter, madam.

*Vio.* I thank you; I trouble you too much; but thou art a good-natured girl, and your attention to me shall not go unrewarded.

*Fanny.* I am happy to wait on you; I wish I could do or say any thing to divert you; but my discourse can't be very amusing to a lady of your sort; and talking of this wedding seems to have made you more melancholy than you was before.

*Vio.* Come hither, child; you have remarked my disquietude; I will now disclose to you the occasion of it: you seem interested for Miss Dove; I am touched with her situation: you tell me, she is the best young lady living.

*Fanny.* Oh, madam! if it were possible for an angel to take a human shape, she must be one.

*Vio.* 'Tis very well; I commend your zeal; you are speaking now of the qualities of her mind.

*Fanny.* Not of them alone; she has not only the virtues, but the beauties of an angel.

*Vio.* Indeed! Pray, tell me, is she so very handsome?

*Fanny.* As fine a person as you could wish to see.

*Vio.* Tall?

*Fanny.* About your size, or rather taller.

*Vio.* Fair, or dark complexioned?

*Fanny.* Of a most lovely complexion; 'tis her greatest beauty, and all pure nature, I'll be answerable; then, her eyes are so soft, and so smiling; and as for her hair——

*Vio.* Hey-day! why, where are you rambling, child? I am satisfied; I make no doubt she is a consummate beauty, and that Mr Belfield loves her to distraction. [*Aside.*] I don't like this girl so well as I did; she is a great talker; I am glad I did not disclose my mind to her; I'll go in, and determine on some expedient. [*Exit.*

*Fanny.* Alas, poor lady! as sure as can be, she has been crossed in love; nothing in this world besides could make her so miserable. But sure I see Mr Francis; if falling in love leads to such misfortunes, 'tis fit I should get out of his way. [*Exit.*

### SCENE II.

*Enter* FRANCIS *and* PHILIP.

*Fran.* Wasn't that your sister, Philip, that ran into the cabin?

*Phi.* I think it was.

*Fran.* You've made a good day's work on't: the weather coming about so fair, I think we've scarce lost any thing of value, but the ship;—didn't you meet the old captain as you came down to the creek?

*Phi.* I did; he has been at sir Benjamin Dove's, here, at Cropley-castle, and is come back in a curious humour.

*Fran.* So! so! I attended my young master thither at the same time; how came they not to return together?

*Phi.* That I can't tell. Come, let's go in, and refresh ourselves. [*Exeunt.*

### SCENE III.

*Enter* SOPHIA DOVE, *and* LUCY WATERS.

*Sophia.* Indeed, and indeed, Miss Lucy Waters, these are strong facts which you tell me; and, I do believe, no prudent woman would engage with a man of Mr Andrew Belfield's disposition: but what course am I to follow? and how am I to extricate myself from the embarrassments of my situation?

*Lucy.* Truly, madam, you have but one refuge that I know of.

*Sophia.* And that lies in the arms of a young adventurer. O, Lucy, Lucy! this is a flattering prescription; calculated rather to humour the patient, than to remove the disease.

*Lucy.* Nay, but if there is a necessity for your taking this step———

*Sophia.* Ay, necessity is grown strangely com-

modious of late, and always compels us to do the very thing we have most a mind to.

*Lucy.* Well, madam, but common humanity to young Mr Belfield——You must allow he has been hardly treated.

*Sophia.* By me, Lucy?

*Lucy.* Madam! No, madam, not by you; but 'tis charity to heal the wounded, though you have not been a party in the fray.

*Sophia.* I grant you. You are a true female philosopher; you would let charity recommend you a husband, and a husband recommend you to charity—But I won't reason upon the matter; at least, not in the humour I am now; not at this particular time: no, Lucy, nor in this particular spot; for here it was, at this very hour, yesterday evening, young Belfield surprised me.

*Lucy.* And see, madam, punctual to the same lucky moment, he comes again! let him plead his own cause; you need fear no interruption; my lady has too agreeable an engagement of her own, to endeavour at disturbing those of other people. [*Exit.*

*Enter* BELFIELD, *jun.*

*Bel. jun.* Have I, then, found thee, loveliest of women? O! Sophia, report has struck me to the heart; if, as I am told, to-morrow gives you to my brother, this is the last time I am ever to behold you.

*Sophia.* Why so, Mr Belfield? Why should our separation be a necessary consequence of our alliance?

*Bel. jun.* Because I have been ambitious, and cannot survive the pangs of disappointment.

*Sophia.* Alas, poor man! but you know where to bury your disappointments; the sea is still open to you; and, take my word for it, Mr Belfield, the man who can live three years, ay, or three months, in separation from the woman of his heart, need be under no apprehension for his life, let what will befall her.

*Bel. jun.* Cruel, insulting Sophia! when I last parted from you, I flattered myself I had left some impression on your heart—But in every event of my life, I meet a base, injurious brother; the everlasting bar to my happiness——I can support it no longer; and Mr Belfield, madam, never can, never shall be yours.

*Sophia.* How, Sir! never shall be mine?—— What do you tell me? There is but that man on earth with whom I can be happy; and if my fate is such, that he is never to be mine, the world, and all that it contains, will for ever after be indifferent to me.

*Bel. jun.* I have heard enough; farewell!

*Sophia.* Farewell, sagacious Mr Belfield! the next fond female, who thus openly declares herself to you, will, I hope, meet with a more gallant reception than I have done.

*Bel. jun.* How! what! is't possible? O, Heavens!

*Sophia.* What, you've discovered it at last? Oh, fie upon you!

*Bel. jun.* Thus, thus, let me embrace my unexpected blessing: come to my heart, my fond, overflowing heart, and tell me once again that my Sophia will be only mine!

*Sophia.* O, man, man! all despondency one moment, all rapture the next. No question now but you conceive every difficulty surmounted, and that we have nothing to do but to run into each other's arms, make a fashionable elopement, and be happy for life? and I must own to you, Belfield, was there no other condition of our union, even this project should not deter me; but I have better hopes, provided you will be piloted by me; for, believe me, my good friend, I am better acquainted with this coast than you are.

*Bel. jun.* I doubt not your discretion, and shall implicitly surrender myself to your guidance.

*Sophia.* Give me a proof of it, then, by retreating from this place immediately; 'tis my father's hour for walking, and I would not have you meet; besides, your brother is expected.

*Bel. jun.* Ay, that brother, my Sophia, that brother, brings vexation and regret whenever he is named! but I hope, I need not dread a second injury in your esteem; and yet I know not how it is, but if I was addicted to superstition——

*Sophia.* And if I was addicted to anger, I should quarrel with you for not obeying my injunctions with more readiness.

*Bel. jun.* I will obey thee, and yet 'tis difficult. Those lips, which thus have blest me, cannot dismiss me without———

*Sophia.* Nay, Mr Belfield, don't you——well, then—mercy upon us! who's coming here?

*Bel. jun.* How! oh, yes! never fear; 'tis a friend; 'tis Violetta; 'tis a lady that I——

*Sophia.* That you what, Mr Belfield? What lady is it! I never saw her in my life before.

*Bel. jun.* No, she is a foreigner, born in Portugal, though of an English family: the packet, in which she was coming to England, foundered along-side of our ship, and I was the instrument of saving her life: I interest myself much in her happiness, and I beseech you, for my sake, to be kind to her. [*Exit.*

*Sophia.* He interests himself much in her happiness; he beseeches me, for his sake, to be kind to her—What am I to judge of all this?

*Enter* VIOLETTA.

*Vio.* Madam, I ask pardon for this intrusion; but I have business with you of a nature that—I presume I'm not mistaken; you are the young lady I have been directed to, the daughter of sir Benjamin Dove?

*Sophia.* I am, madam; but wont you please to repose yourself in the house? I understand you are a stranger in this country. May I beg to

know what commands you have for me? Mr Belfield has made me acquainted with some circumstances relative to your story: and, for his sake, madam, I shall be proud to render you any service in my power.

*Vio.* For Mr Belfield's sake, did you say, madam? Has Mr Belfield named me to you, madam?

*Sophia.* Is there any wonder in that, pray?

*Vio.* No; none at all. If any man else, such confidence would surprise me; but, in Mr Belfield, 'tis natural; there is no wondering at what he does.

*Sophia.* You must pardon me: I find we think differently of Mr Belfield. He left me but this minute, and, in the kindest terms, recommended you to my friendship.

*Vio.* 'Twas he, then, that parted from you as I came up? I thought so; but I was too much agitated to observe him—and I am confident he is too guilty to dare to look upon me.

*Sophia.* Why so, madam? For Heaven's sake, inform me what injuries you have received from Mr Belfield; I must own to you, I am much interested in finding him to be a man of honour.

*Vio.* I know your situation, madam, and I pity it. Providence has sent me here, in time to save you, and to tell you———

*Sophia.* What? To tell me what? Oh! speak, or I shall sink with apprehension!

*Vio.* To tell you, that he is——my husband!

*Sophia.* Husband! your husband? what do I hear! ungenerous, base, deceitful Belfield! I thought he seemed confounded at your appearance; every thing confirms his treachery; and I cannot doubt the truth of what you tell me.

*Vio.* A truth it is, madam, that I must ever reflect on with the most sorrowful regret.

*Sophia.* Come, let me beg you to walk towards the house. I ask no account of this transaction of Mr Belfield's. I would fain banish his name from my memory for ever; and you shall this instant be a witness of his peremptory dismission. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE VI.

*Enter* BELFIELD *jun. and* PATERSON.

*Bel. jun.* And so, sir, these are her ladyship's commands, are they?

*Pat.* This is what I am commissioned by lady Dove to tell you: what report shall I make to her?

*Bel. jun.* Even what you please, Mr Paterson; mould it and model it to your liking; put as many palliatives, as you think proper, to sweeten it to her ladyship's taste; so you do but give her to understand, that I neither can, nor will abandon my Sophia. Cease to think of her, indeed! What earthly power can exclude her idea from my thoughts? I am surprized lady Dove should think of sending me such a message; and I wonder, sir, that you should consent to bring it.

*Pat.* Sir!———

*Bel. jun.* Nay, Mr Paterson, don't assume such a menacing air; nor practise on my temper too far in this business. I know both your situation and my own. Consider, sir, mine is a cause that would animate the most dastardly spirit; your's is enough to damp the most courageous.

[*Exit* BEL. *jun.*

*Pat.* A very short and sententious gentleman: but there is truth in his remark. Mine is but a sorry commission, after all. The man is in the right to fight for his mistress; she's worth the venture; and, if there was no way else to be quit of mine, I should be in the right to fight, too: egad, I don't see why aversion should not make me as desperate as love makes him. Hell and fury! here comes my Venus!

*Enter* LADY DOVE.

*Lady Dove.* Well, Paterson, what says the fellow to my message?

*Pat.* Says, madam! I'm ashamed to tell you what he says: he's the arrantest boatswain that ever I conversed with.

*Lady Dove.* But tell me what he says.

*Pat.* Every thing that scandal and scurrility can utter against you.

*Lady Dove.* Against me! What could he say against me?

*Pat.* Modesty forbids me to tell you.

*Lady Dove.* Oh! the vile reprobate! I, that have been so guarded in my conduct, so discreet in my partialities, as to keep them secret, even from my own husband; but, I hope, he did not venture to abuse my person?

*Pat.* No, madam, no; had he proceeded to such lengths, I could not in honour have put up with it; I hope I have more spirit than to suffer any reflections upon your ladyship's personal accomplishments.

*Lady Dove.* Well; but did you say nothing in defence of my reputation?

*Pat.* Nothing.

*Lady Dove.* No?

*Pat.* Not a syllable! Trust me for that; 'tis the wisest way, upon all tender topics, to be silent; for he, who takes upon him to defend a lady's reputation, only publishes her favours to the world; and, therefore, I would always leave that office to a husband.

*Lady Dove.* 'Tis true; and, if sir Benjamin had any heart——

*Pat.* Come, come, my dear lady, don't be too severe upon sir Benjamin: many men, of no better appearance than sir Benjamin, have shown themselves perfect heroes: I know a whole family, that, with the limbs of ladies, have the hearts of lions. Who can tell but your husband may be one of this sort?

*Lady Dove.* Ah!

*Pat.* Well, but try him; tell him how you have been used, and see what his spirit will prompt

him to do. A-propos! here the gentleman comes: if he won't fight, 'tis but what you expect; if he will, who can tell where a lucky arrow may hit? [*Exit* PAT.

*Enter* SIR BENJAMIN DOVE.

*Lady Dove.* Sir Benjamin, I want to have a little discourse in private with you.

*Sir Ben.* With me, my lady?

*Lady Dove.* With you, sir Benjamin; 'tis upon a matter of a very serious nature; pray, sit down by me. I don't know how it is, my dear, but I have observed, of late, with much concern, a great abatement in your regard for me.

*Sir Ben.* Oh! fie, my lady, why do you think so? What reason have you for so unkind a suspicion?

*Lady Dove.* 'Tis in vain for you to deny it; I am convinced you have done loving me.

*Sir Ben.* Well now, I vow, my dear, as I am a sinner, you do me wrong.

*Lady Dove.* Look'e, sir Benjamin, love, like mine, is apt to be quick-sighted; and, I am persuaded, I am not deceived in my observation.

*Sir Ben.* Indeed, and indeed, my lady Dove, you accuse me wrongfully.

*Lady Dove.* Mistake me not, my dear, I do not accuse you; I accuse myself; I am sensible there are faults and imperfections in my temper.

*Sir Ben.* Oh! trifles, my dear, mere trifles.

*Lady Dove.* Come, come, I know you have led but an uncomfortable life of late, and, I am afraid, I've been innocently, in some degree, the cause of it.

*Sir Ben.* Far be it from me to contradict your ladyship, if you are pleased to say so.

*Lady Dove.* I am sure it has been as I say; my over-fondness for you has been troublesome and vexatious; you hate confinement, I know you do; you are a man of spirit, and formed to figure in the world.

*Sir Ben.* Oh, you flatter me!

*Lady Dove.* Nay, nay, there's no disguising it; you sigh for action; your looks declare it: this alteration in your habit and appearance, puts it out of doubt: there is a certain quickness in your eye; 'twas the first symptom that attracted my regards; and, I am mistaken, sir Benjamin, if you don't possess as much courage as any man.

*Sir Ben.* Your ladyship does me honour.

*Lady Dove.* I do you justice, sir Benjamin.

*Sir Ben.* Why, I believe, for the matter of courage, I have as much as my neighbours; but 'tis of a strange perverse quality; for, as some spirits rise with the difficulties they are to encounter, my courage, on the contrary, is always greatest when there is least call for it.

*Lady Dove.* Oh! you shall never make me believe this, sir Benjamin; you could not bear to see me ill used; I'm positive you could not.

*Sir Ben.* 'Tis as well, however, not to be too sure of that. [*Aside.*

*Lady Dove.* You could not be so mean-spirited, as to stand by and hear your poor dear wife abused and insulted, and——

*Sir Ben.* Oh! no, by no means; 'twould break my heart; but, who has abused you and insulted you, and——

*Lady Dove.* Who? Why, this young Belfield, that I told you of.

*Sir Ben.* Oh! never listen to him! A woman of your years should have more sense than to mind what such idle young fleerers can say of you.

*Lady Dove.* [*Rising.*] My years, sir Benjamin! Why, you are more intolerable than he is! but let him take his course; let him run away with your daughter; it shall be no further concern of mine to prevent him.

*Sir Ben.* No, my dear, I've done that effectually.

*Lady Dove.* How so, pray?

*Sir Ben.* By taking care he shan't run away with my estate at the same time. Some people lock their daughters up to prevent their eloping. I've gone a wiser way to work with mine; let her go loose, and locked up her fortune.

*Lady Dove.* And, on my conscience, I believe you mean to do the same by your wife; turn her loose upon the world, as you do your daughter; leave her to the mercy of every free-booter; let her be vilified and abused; her honour, her reputation, mangled and torn by every paltry privateering fellow that fortune casts upon your coasts.

*Sir Ben.* Hold, my lady, hold! young Belfield did not glance at your reputation, I hope! did he?

*Lady Dove.* Indeed, but he did though; and therein, I think, every wife has a title to her husband's protection.

*Sir Ben.* True, my dear; 'tis our duty to plead, but your's to provide us with the brief.

*Lady Dove.* There are some insults, sir Benjamin, that no man of spirit ought to put up with; and the imputation of being made a wittol of, is the most unpardonable of any.

*Sir Ben.* Right, my dear; even truth, you know, is not to be spoke at all times.

*Lady Dove.* How, sir! would you insinuate any thing to the disparagement of my fidelity? but choose your side; quarrel you must, either with him, or with me.

*Sir Ben.* Oh! if that's the alternative, what a deal of time have we wasted! Step with me into my library, and I'll pen him a challenge immediately. [*Exeunt.*

## ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*The cabin, with a view of the sea, as before.*

PHILIP, LUCY WATERS.

*Phi.* How I have loved you, Lucy, and what I have suffered on your account, you know well enough; and you should not now, when I am struggling to forget you, come to put me in mind of past afflictions: go, go; leave me: I pray you, leave me.

*Lucy.* Nay, Philip, but hear me!

*Phi.* Hear you, ungrateful girl! you know it has been all my delight to hear you, to see you, and to sit by your side; for hours have I done it; for whole days together: but those days are past; I must labour now for my livelihood; and, if you rob me of my time, you wrong me of my subsistence.

*Lucy.* O! Philip, I am undone, if you don't protect me!

*Phi.* Ah! Lucy, that, I fear, is past prevention!

*Lucy.* No, Philip, no; I am innocent! and, therefore, persecuted by the most criminal of men. I have disclosed all Mr Belfield's artifices to Miss Sophia, and now am terrified to death; I saw him follow me out of the Park, as I was coming hither, and I dare not return home alone; indeed, Philip, I dare not.

*Phi.* Well, Lucy, step in with me, and fear nothing; I see the 'squire is coming,——He, who can refuse his protection to a woman, may he never taste the blessings a woman can bestow!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.

*Enter* BELFIELD *sen.*

*Bel. sen.* Ay, 'tis she! Confusion follow her! —How perversely has she traversed my projects with Sophia!—By all that's resolute, I'll be revenged.—My brother, too, returned. Vexatious circumstance! there am I foiled again—Since first I stepped out of the path of honour, what have I obtained?——O treachery! treachery! if thou canst not in this world make us happy, better have remained that dull formal thing, an honest man, and trusted to what the future might produce.

*Enter* PHILIP.

So, fellow, who are you?

*Phi.* A man, sir; an honest man!

*Bel. sen.* A saucy one, methinks.

*Phi.* The injurious are apt to think so; however, I ask pardon: as your riches make you too proud, my honesty, perhaps, makes me too bold.

*Bel. sen.* O! I know you now; you are son to that old fellow I thought proper to discharge from my farm; please to betake yourself from the door of your cabin; there's a young woman within I must have a word with.

*Phi.* If 'tis Lucy Waters you would speak with——

*Bel. sen.* If, rascal! It is Lucy Waters that I would speak with; that I will speak with; and, spite of your insolence, compel to answer whatever I please to ask, and go with me wherever I please to carry her.

*Phi.* Then, sir, I must tell you, poor as I am, she is under my protection: you see, sir, I am armed; you have no right to force an entrance here; and, while I have life, you never shall.

*Bel. sen.* Then, be it at your peril, villain, if you oppose me. [*They fight.*

*Enter* PATERSON, *who beats down their swords.*

*Pat.* For shame, Mr Belfield! what are you about? Tilting with this peasant!

*Bel. sen.* Paterson, stand off!

*Pat.* Come, come; put up your sword.

*Bel. sen.* Damnation, sir! what do you mean? Do you turn against me? Give way, or, by my soul, I'll run you through!

*Enter* CAPTAIN IRONSIDES *and* SKIFF.

*Iron.* Hey-day, what the devil ails you all? I thought the whole ship's company had sprung a mutiny. Master and I were taking a nap together for good fellowship; and you make such a damned clattering and clashing, there's no sleeping in peace for you.

*Bel. sen.* Come, Mr Paterson, will you please to bear me company, or stay with your new acquaintance?

*Iron.* Oh ho! my righteous nephew, is it you that are kicking up this riot? Why, you ungracious profligate, would you murder an honest lad in the door of his own house?—his castle—his castellum——Are these your fresh-water tricks?

*Bel. sen.* Your language, Captain Ironsides, savours strongly of your profession; and I hold both you, your occupation, and opinion, equally vulgar and contemptible.

*Pat.* Come, Mr Belfield, come: for Heaven's sake let us go home.

*Iron.* My profession! Why, what have you to say to my profession, you unsanctified whelp you? I hope 'tis an honest vocation to fight the enemies of one's country. You, it seems, are for murdering its friends. I trust, it is not for such a skipjack as thee art, to fleer at my profession. Master, did'st ever hear the like?

*Skiff.* Never, Captain, never. For my own part, I am one of few words; but, for my own part, I always thought, that to be a brave seaman, like your honour, was the greatest title an Englishman can wear.

*Iron.* Why, so it is, Skiff: ahem!

*Bel. sen.* Well, sir, I leave you to the enjoy-

ment of your honours; so your servant. Sirrah, I shall find a time for you.

[BELFIELD *is going out.*

*Iron.* Hark'e, sir, come back; one more word with you.

*Bel. sen.* Well, sir——

*Iron.* Your father was an honest gentleman: your mother, though I say it, that should not say it, was an angel; my eyes ache when I speak of her: ar'n't you ashamed, sirrah, to disgrace such parents? My nephew Bob, your brother, is as honest a lad, and as brave, as ever stept between stem and stern; a' has a few faults indeed, as who is free? But you, Andrew, you are as false as a quick-sand, and as full of mischief as a fire-ship.

*Bel. sen.* Captain Ironsides, I have but little time to bestow on you; if you have nothing else to entertain me with, the sooner we part the better.

*Iron.* No, sir, one thing more, and I have done with you. They tell me you're parliament-man here for the borough of Knavestown: the Lord have mercy upon the nation, when such fellows as thou art are to be our law-makers—For my own part, I can shift; I'll take shipping, and live in Lapland, and be dry nurse to a bear, rather than dwell in a country where I am to be governed by such a thing as thou art.

*Bel. sen.* By your manners, I should guess you had executed that office already: however, lose no time, fit out a new Charming Sally, and set sail for Lapland; 'tis the properest place for you to live in, and a bear the fittest companion for you to keep.

[*Exeunt* BELFIELD *and* PATERSON.

*Iron.* Hark'e, Philip? I forgot to ask what all this stir was about.

*Phi.* Sir, if you please to walk in, I will inform you.

*Iron.* With all my heart. A pragmatical, impertinent coxcomb! Come, master, we'll fill a pipe, and hear the lad's story within doors. I never yet was ashamed of my profession, and I'll take care my profession shall have no reason to be ashamed of me. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE III.

*Enter* BELFIELD *jun. and* SOPHIA.

*Bel. jun.* Madam, madam, will you not vouchsafe to give me a hearing?

*Sophia.* Unless you could recal an act, no earthly power can cancel, all attempt at explanation is vain.

*Bel. jun.* Yet, before we part for ever, obstinate, inexorable Sophia! tell me what is my offence?

*Sophia.* Answer yourself that question, Mr Belfield; consult your own heart; consult your Violetta.

*Bel. jun.* Now, on my life, she's meanly jealous of Violetta! that grateful woman has been warm in her commendations of me, and her distempered fancy turns that candour into criminality.

*Sophia.* Ha! he seems confounded! guilty beyond all doubt.

*Bel. jun* By Heaven I'll no longer be the dupe to these bad humours! Lucy Waters, Violetta, every woman she sees or hears, alarms her jealousy, overthrows my hopes, and rouses every passion into fury. Well, madam, at length I see what you allude to; I shall follow your advice, and consult my Violetta; nay, more, consult my happiness; for with her, at least, I shall find repose; with you, I plainly see, there can be none.

*Sophia.* 'Tis very well, sir; the only favour you can now grant me, is never to let me see you again; for, after what has passed between us, every time you intrude into my company, you will commit an insult upon good breeding and humanity.

*Bel. jun.* Madam, I'll take care to give you no further offence. [*Exit.*

*Sophia.* Oh! my poor heart will break!

*Enter* SIR BENJAMIN DOVE.

*Sir Ben.* Hey-day, Sophia, what's the matter? What ails my child? Who has offended you? Did not I see the younger Belfield part from you just now?

*Sophia.* O, sir! if you have any love for me, don't name that base, treacherous wretch, to me any more. [*Exit.*

*Sir Ben.* Upon my word, I am young Mr Belfield's most obsequious servant! a very notable confusion truly has he been pleased to make in my family! Lady Dove raves, Sophia cries; my wife calls him a saucy, impudent fellow; my daughter says he's a base, treacherous wretch; from all which I am to conclude, that he has spoke too plain truths to the one, and told too many lies to the other. One lady is irritated because he has refused favours; the other, perhaps, is afflicted because he has obtained them. Lady Dove has peremptorily insisted upon my giving him a challenge; but, to say the truth, I had no great stomach to the business, till this fresh provocation. I perceive now, I am growing into a most unaccountable rage; 'tis something so different from what I ever felt before, that, for what I know, it may be courage, and I mistake it for anger. I never did quarrel with any man, and, hitherto, no man ever quarrelled with me. Egad, if once I break the ice, it shan't stop here: if young Belfield doesn't prove me a coward, lady Dove shall see that I am a man of spirit.—Sure I see my gentleman coming hither again. [*Steps aside.*

*Enter* BELFIELD *jun.*

*Bel. jun.* What meanness, what infatuation possesses me, that I should resolve to throw my-

self once more in her way! but she's gone, and yet I may escape with credit.

*Sir Ben.* Ay, there he is, sure enough: by the mass, I don't like him: I'll listen awhile, and discover what sort of a humour he is in.

*Bel. jun.* I am ashamed of this weakness: I am determined to assume a proper spirit, and act as becomes a man upon this occasion.

*Sir Ben.* Upon my soul I'm very sorry for it!

*Bel. jun.* Now am I so distracted between love, rage, and disappointment, that I could find in my heart to sacrifice her, myself, and all mankind.

*Sir Ben.* Lord have mercy upon us! I'd better steal off, and leave him to himself.

*Bel. jun.* And yet, perhaps, all this may proceed from an excess of fondness in my Sophia.

*Sir Ben.* Upon my word you are blest with a most happy assurance.

*Bel. jun.* Something may have dropped from Violetta to alarm her jealousy; and, working upon the exquisite sensibility of her innocent mind, may have brought my sincerity into question.

*Sir Ben.* I don't understand a word of all this.

*Bel. jun.* Now could I fall at her feet for pardon, though I know not in what I have offended; I have not the heart to move. Fy upon it! What an arrant coward has love made me!

*Sir Ben.* A coward does he say? I am heartily rejoiced to hear it: if I must needs come to action, pray Heaven it be with a coward! I'll even take him while he is in the humour, for fear he should recover his courage, and I lose mine. [*Aside.*]——So, sir, your humble servant, Mr Belfield! I'm glad I have found you, sir.

*Bel. jun.* Sir Benjamin, your most obedient. Pray, what are your commands, now you have found me?

*Sir Ben.* Hold! hold! don't come any nearer: don't you see I am in a most prodigious passion? Fire and fury! what's the reason you have made all this disorder in my house? my daughter in tears; my wife in fits; every thing in an uproar; and all your doing! Do you think I'll put up with this treatment? If you suppose you have a coward to deal with, you'll find yourself mistaken; greatly mistaken, let me tell you, sir! Mercy upon me, what a passion I am in! In short, Mr Belfield, the honour of my house is concerned, and I must, and will have satisfaction. I think this is pretty well to set out with. I'm horribly out of breath. I sweat at every pore. What great fatigues do men of courage undergo!

*Bel. jun.* Look'e, sir Benjamin, I don't rightly comprehend what you would be at; but, if you think I have injured you, few words are best; disputes between men of honour are soon adjusted; I'm at your service, in any way you think fit.

*Sir Ben.* How you fly out now! Is that giving me the satisfaction I require? I am the person injured in this matter, and, as such, have a right to be in a passion; but I see neither right nor reason why you, who have done the wrong, should be as angry as I, who have received it.

*Bel. jun.* I suspect I have totally mistaken this honest gentleman; he only wants to build some reputation with his wife upon this rencounter, and 'twould be inhuman not to gratify him. [*Aside.*

*Sir Ben.* What shall I do now? Egad I seem to have posed him: this plaguy sword sticks so hard in the scabbard—Well, come forth, rapier; 'tis but one thrust; and what should a man fear, that has lady Dove for his wife?

*Bel. jun.* Hey-day! Is the man mad? Put up your sword, sir Benjamin; put it up, and don't expose yourself in this manner.

*Sir Ben.* You shall excuse me, sir; I have had some difficulty in drawing it, and am determined now to try what metal it's made of. So come on, sir.

*Bel. jun.* Really this is too ridiculous; I tell you, sir Benjamin, I am in no humour for these follies. I've done no wrong to you or yours: on the contrary, great wrong has been done to me; but I have no quarrel with you; so, pray, put up your sword.

*Sir Ben.* And I tell you, Mr Belfield, 'tis in vain to excuse yourself.—The less readiness he shews, so much the more resolution I feel. [*Aside.*

*Bel. jun.* Well, sir knight, if such is your humour, I won't spoil your longing. So have at you!

*Enter* LADY DOVE.

*Lady Dove.* Ah! [*Shricks.*

*Bel. jun.* Hold, hold, sir Benjamin! I never fight in ladies' company. Why, I protest you are a perfect Amadis de Gaul; a Don Quixotte in heroism; and the presence of this your dulcinea renders you invincible.

*Sir Ben.* Oh! my lady, is it you? don't be alarmed, my dear; 'tis all over: a small fracas between this gentleman and myself; that's all; don't be under any surprize; I believe the gentleman has had enough; I believe he is perfectly satisfied with my behaviour, and I persuade myself you will have no cause for the future to complain of his. Mr Belfield, this is lady Dove.

*Bel. jun.* Madam, to a generous enemy, 'tis mean to deny justice, or with-hold applause. You are happy in the most valiant of defenders. Gentle as you may find him in the tender passions, to a man, madam, he acquits himself like a man. Sir Benjamin Dove, in justice to your merit, I am ready to make any submission to this lady you shall please to impose. If you suffer her to bully you after this, you deserve to be henpecked all the days of your life. [*Aside.*

*Sir Ben.* Say no more, my dear Bob; I shall love you for this the longest hour I have to live.

*Bel. jun.* If I have done you any service, promise me only one hour's conversation with your lovely daughter, and make what use of me you please.

*Sir Ben.* Here's my hand, you shall have it; leave us. [*Exit* BEL. *jun.*

*Lady Dove.* What am I to think of all this? It can't well be a contrivance; and yet 'tis strange, that yon little animal should have the assurance to face a man, and be so bashful at a rencounter with a woman.

*Sir Ben.* Well, lady Dove, what are you musing upon? you see you are obeyed; the honour of your family is vindicated. Slow to enter into these affairs; being once engaged, I pertinaciously conduct them to an issue.

*Lady Dove.* Sir Benjamin——I——I——

*Sir Ben.* Here, Jonathan! do you hear? set my things ready in the library; make haste.

*Lady Dove.* I say, sir Benjamin, I think——

*Sir Ben.* Well, let's hear what it is you think.

*Lady Dove.* Bless us all, why you snap one up so—I say, I think, my dear, you have acquitted yourself tolerably well, and I am perfectly satisfied.

*Sir Ben.* Humph! you think I have done tolerably well? I think so too; do you apprehend me? Tolerably! for this business that you think tolerably well done, is but half concluded, let me tell you: nay, what some would call the toughest part of the undertaking remains unfinished; but, I dare say, with your concurrence, I shall find it easy enough.

*Lady Dove.* What is it you mean to do with my concurrence; what mighty project does your wise brain teem with?

*Sir Ben.* Nay, now I reflect on't again, I don't think there will be any need of your concurrence; for, nolens or volens, I'm determined it shall be done. In short, this it is; I am unalterably resolved, from this time forward, lady Dove, to be sole and absolute in this house, master of my own servants, father to my own child, and sovereign lord and governor, madam, over my own wife.

*Lady Dove.* You are?

*Sir Ben.* I am. Gods! gods! what a pitiful contemptible figure does a man make under petticoat government! Perish he that's mean enough to stoop to such indignities! I am determined to be free——

PATERSON *enters, and whispers* LADY DOVE.

Ha! how's this, Mr Paterson? What liberties are these you take with my wife, and before my face? no more of these freedoms, I beseech you, sir, as you expect to answer it to a husband, who will have no secrets whispered to his wife, to which he is not privy; nor any appointments made, in which he is not a party.

*Pat.* Hey-day! what a change of government is here! Egad, I'm very glad on't—I've no notion of a female administration. [*Exit.*

*Lady Dove.* What insolence is this, sir Benjamin? what ribaldry do you shock my ears with? Let me pass, sir; I'll stay no longer in the same room with you.

*Sir Ben.* Not in the same room, nor under the same roof, shall you long abide, unless you reform your manners. However, for the present, you must be content to stay where you are.

*Lady Dove.* What, sir! will you imprison me in my own house? I'm sick; I'm ill; I'm suffocated; I want air; I must and will walk into the garden.

*Sir Ben.* Then, madam, you must find some better weapon than your fan to parry my sword with: this pass I defend: what! do'st think, after having encountered a man, I shall turn my back upon a woman? No, madam; I have ventured my life to defend your honour; 'twould be hard if I wanted spirit to protect my own.

*Lady Dove.* You monster! would you draw your sword upon a woman?

*Sir Ben.* Unless it has been your pleasure to make me a monster, madam, I am none.

*Lady Dove.* Would you murder me, you inhuman brute? Would you murder your poor, fond, defenceless wife?

*Sir Ben.* Nor tears, nor threats, neither scolding, nor soothing, shall shake me from my purpose: your yoke, lady Dove, has laid too heavy upon my shoulders; I can support it no longer: to-morrow, madam, you leave this house.

*Lady Dove.* Will you break my heart, you tyrant? Will you turn me out of doors to starve, you barbarous man?

*Sir Ben.* Oh! never fear; you will fare to the full as well as you did in your first husband's time; in your poor, dear, dead, Mr Searcher's time. You told me once you prized the paltry grey-hound that hung at his button-hole, more than all the jewels my folly had lavished upon you. I take you at your word. You shall have your bawble, and I will take back all mine; they'll be of no use to you hereafter.

*Lady Dove.* O! sir Benjamin, sir Benjamin! for mercy's sake, turn me not out of your doors! I will be obedient, gentle, and complying, for the future; don't shame me; on my knees, I beseech you don't.

*Enter* BELFIELD *senior.*

*Sir Ben.* Mr Belfield, I am heartily glad to see you; don't go back, sir; you catch us indeed a little unawares; but these situations are not uncommon in well-ordered families. Rewards and punishments are the life of government; and the authority of a husband must be upheld.

*Bel. sen.* I confess, sir Benjamin, I was greatly surprised at finding lady Dove in that attitude: but I never pry into family secrets; I had much rather suppose your lady was on her knees to in-

tercede with you on my behalf, than be told she was reduced to that humble posture for any reason that affects herself.

*Sir Ben.* Sir, you are free to suppose what you please for lady Dove; I'm willing to spare you that trouble on my account; and therefore, I tell you plainly, if you will sign and seal your articles this night, to-morrow morning Sophia shall be yours: I'm resolved, that the self-same day which consecrates the redemption of my liberty, shall confirm the surrender of yours.

*Lady Dove.* O! Mr Belfield, I beseech you, intercede with this dear, cruel man, in my behalf! would you believe, that he harbours a design of expelling me his house, on the very day, too, when he purposes celebrating the nuptials of his daughter?

*Bel. sen.* Come, sir Benjamin, I must speak to you now as a friend in the nearest connexion. I beg you will not damp our happiness with so melancholy an event: I will venture to pledge myself for her ladyship.

*Sir Ben.* Well, for your sake, perhaps I may prolong her departure for one day; but I'm determined, if she does stay to-morrow, she shall set the first dish upon the table; if 'tis only to shew the company what a refractory wife, in the hands of a man of spirit, may be brought to submit to. Our wives, Mr Belfield, may teaze us, and vex us, and still escape with impunity; but if once they thoroughly provoke us, the charm breaks, and they are lost for ever.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—*The sea-coast, as before.*

*Enter* GOODWIN *and* FANNY.

*Good.* WHAT you tell me, Fanny, gives me great concern; that Mr Francis should think to seduce the innocence of my child for a paltry bribe! what can have passed to encourage him to put such an affront upon you?

*Fan.* Till this proposal, which I tell you of, I always took Mr Francis for one of the best behaved, modestest young men, I had ever met with.

*Good.* To say the truth, Fanny, so did I; but the world is full of hypocrisy, and our acquaintance with him has been very short——

*Enter* FRANCIS.

Hark'e, young man, a word with you! What is it I or my children have done to offend you?

*Fran.* Offend me! what is it you mean?

*Good.* When your vessel was stranded upon our coast, did we take advantage of your distress? On the contrary, was'nt this poor hut thrown open to your use, as a receptacle for your treasures, and a repose for your fatigues? Have either those treasures, or that repose, been invaded? Whom amongst you have we robbed or defrauded?

*Fran.* None, none—your honesty has been as conspicuous as your hospitality.

*Good.* Why, then, having received no injury, do you seek to do one? an injury of the basest nature—You see, there, a poor girl, whose only portion in this world is her innocence, and of that you have sought to——

*Fran.* Hold—nor impute designs to me which I abhor. You say your daughter has no portion but her innocence—assured of that, I ask none else; and, if she can forgive the stratagem I have made use of, I am ready to atone for it by a life devoted to her service.

*Good.* Well, sir, I am happy to find you are the man I took you for, and cannot discommend your caution; so that, if you like my daughter, and Fanny is consenting—But, soft! who have we got here?

*Fran.* I wish Mr Paterson was further for interrupting us just now.

*Enter* PATERSON.

*Pat.* Pray, good people, isn't there a lady with you of the name of Violetta?

*Good.* There is.

*Pat.* Can you direct me to her? I have business with her of the utmost consequence.

*Good.* Fanny, you and Mr Francis step in and let the lady know.

[*Exeunt* FANNY *and* FRANCIS.

If its no offence, Mr Paterson, allow me to ask you, whether there is any hope of our young gentleman here, who is just returned, succeeding in his addresses to Miss Dove?

*Pat.* Certainly none, Mr Goodwin.

*Good.* I'm heartily sorry for it.

*Pat.* I find you are a stranger to the reasons which make against it: but how are you interested in his success?

*Good.* I am a witness of his virtues, and consequently not indifferent to his success.

[*Exit* GOODWIN.

*Enter* VIOLETTA.

*Pat.* Madam, I presume your name is Violetta?

*Vio.* It is, sir.

*Pat.* I wait upon you, madam, at Miss Dove's desire, and as a particular friend of Mr Andrew Belfield's.

*Vio.* Sir!——

*Pat.* Madam!——

*Vio.* Pray, proceed.

*Pat.* To intreat the favour of your company at Cropley-castle upon business, wherein that

lady and gentlemen are intimately concerned: I presume, madam, you guess what I mean?

*Vio.* Indeed, sir, I cannot easily guess how I can possibly be a party in any business between Miss Dove and Mr Belfield. I thought all intercourse between those persons was now entirely at an end.

*Pat.* Oh! no, madam; by no means; the affair is far from being at an end.

*Vio.* How, sir, not at an end?

*Pat.* No, madam—on the contrary, from sir Benjamin's great anxiety for the match, and, above all, from the very seasonable intelligence you was so good to communicate to Miss Sophia, I am not without hopes that Mr Andrew Belfield will be happy enough to conquer all her scruples, and engage her to consent to marry him.

*Vio.* Indeed! but pray, sir, those scruples of Miss Dove's, which you flatter yourself Mr Belfield will so happily conquer, how is it that ladies in this country reconcile themselves to such matters? I should have thought such an obstacle utterly insurmountable.

*Pat.* Why, to be sure, madam, Miss Dove has had some doubts and difficulties to contend with: but duty, you know——and, as I said before, you, madam, you have been a great friend to Mr Belfield—you have forwarded matters surprisingly.

*Vio.* It is very surprising, truly, if I have.

*Pat.* You seem greatly staggered at what I tell you: I see you are a stranger to the principles upon which young ladies frequently act in this country. I believe, madam, in England, as many, or more, matches are made from pique, than for love; and, to say the truth, I take this of Miss Dove's to be one of that sort. There is a certain person, you know, who will feel upon this occasion.

*Vio.* Yes; I well know there is a certain person, who will feel upon this occasion; but, are the sufferings of that unhappy one to be converted into raillery and amusement?

*Pat.* Oh! Madam! the ladies will tell you, that therein consists the very luxury of revenge ——But, I beseech you, have the goodness to make haste: my friend Mr Belfield may stand in need of your support.

*Vio.* Thus insulted, I can contain myself no longer. Upon what infernal shore am I cast! into what society of demons am I fallen! that a woman, whom, by an act of honour, I would have redeemed from misery and ruin, should have the insolence, the inhumanity, to invite me to be a spectatress of her marriage with my own husband!

*Pat.* With your husband! What do I hear? Is Mr Andrew Belfield your husband?

*Via.* Ay—do you doubt it? Would I could say he was not!

*Pat.* Just Heaven! you then are the Violetta —you are the Portuguese lady I have heard so much of, and married to Mr Belfield! base and perfidious!—Why, madam, both Miss Dove and myself conceived that 'twas the young adventurer, with whom you suffered shipwreck, that—

*Vio.* What! Lewson, the brave, generous, honourable Lewson?

*Pat.* Lewson! Lewson! as sure as can be, you mean young Belfield; for now, the recollection strikes me, that I've heard he took that name before he quitted England. That Lewson, madam, whom we believed you married to, is Robert Belfield, and younger brother to your husband.

*Vio.* Mercy defend me! into what distress had this mutual mistake nearly involved us!

*Pat.* Come, then, madam, let us lose no time, but fly with all dispatch to Cropley-castle. I have a post-chaise waiting, which will convey us thither in a few minutes: but, before we go, I'll step in and direct these good people to find young Belfield, and send him after us—Old Ironsides and all must be there.

[*Exit* PATERSON.

*Vio.* Let me reflect upon my fate—— Wedded, betrayed, abandoned! at once a widow and a wife—all that my soul held dear, in the same hour obtained and lost! O false, false Belfield! Strong, indeed, must be that passion, and deeply seated in my heart, which even thy treachery could not eradicate! Twice shipwrecked! twice rescued from the jaws of death!—Just Heaven! I do not, dare not murmur, nor can I doubt but that thy hand invisibly is stretched forth to save me, and, through this labyrinth of sorrow, to conduct me to repose.

*Enter* PATERSON.

*Pat.* Now, madam, if you will trust yourself to my convoy, I'll bring you into harbour, where you shall never suffer shipwreck more. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—SIR BENJAMIN DOVE'S *house.*

*Enter* SIR BENJAMIN DOVE *and* LADY DOVE.

*Sir Ben.* Upon these terms and stipulations, lady Dove, I consent to your remaining at Cropley castle. Enjoy you your own prerogative, and leave me in possession of mine. Above all things, my dear, I must insist, that Mr Paterson be henceforward considered as my friend and companion, and not your ladyship's.

*Lady Dove.* Nay, but indeed and indeed, my dear sir Benjamin, this is being too hard with me, to debar me the common gratifications of every woman of distinction: Mr Paterson, you know, is my very particular friend.

*Sir Ben.* 'Tis for his being so very particular, my dear, that I object to him.

*Lady Dove.* Friendship, sir Benjamin, is the virtuous recreation of delicate and susceptible minds—Would you envy me that innocent pleasure? Why, you know, my dearest, that your

passion for me, which was once so violent, is now softened and subsided into mere friendship.

*Sir Ben.* True, my dear—and, therefore, I am afraid lest my love having, by easy degrees, slackened into friendship, his friendship should, by as natural a transition, quicken into love—say no more, therefore, upon this point, but leave me to Mr Paterson, and Mr Paterson to me—Go—send Sophia to me—oh, here she comes: your ladyship need not be present at our conference; I think my own daughter surely belongs to my province, and not yours. Good morning to you! [*Exit* LADY DOVE.

*Enter* SOPHIA.

Well, daughter, are you prepared to comply with my desires, and give your hand to Andrew Belfield this morning?

*Sophia.* Sir!

*Sir Ben.* My heart is fixed upon this event—I have watched late and early to bring it to bear; and you'll find, my child, when you come to peruse your marriage settlement, how tenderly I have consulted your happiness in this match.

*Sophia.* Alas! I should never think of searching for happiness amongst deeds and conveyances—'tis the man, and not the money, that is likely to determine my lot.

*Sir Ben.* Well, and is not Mr Belfield a man? a fine man, as I take it, he is, and a fine estate I'm sure he has got—then it lies so handy and contiguous to my own—only a hedge betwixt us—think of that, Sophy! only a hedge that parts his manor from mine—then consider, likewise, how this alliance will accommodate matters in the borough of Knavestown, where I and my family have stood three contested elections with his, and lost two of them—that sport will now be at an end, and our interests will be consolidated by this match, as well as our estates.

*Sophia.* Still you mistake my meaning—I talk of the qualities of a man, you of his possessions—I require in a husband, good morals, good nature, and good sense—what has all this to do with contiguous estates, connected interests, and contested elections?

*Sir Ben.* I don't rightly understand what you would have, child—but this I well know, that if money alone will not make a woman happy, 'twill always purchase that that will. I hope, Sophy, you've done thinking of that rambling, idle young fellow, Bob Belfield?

*Sophia.* Perish all thought of him for ever! Nothing can be more contrary, more impossible in nature, than my union with young Belfield: age, ugliness, ill-nature—bring any thing to my arms, rather than him.

*Sir Ben.* But why so angry with him, child? This violent detestation and abhorrence is as favourable a symptom as any reasonable lover could wish for.

*Enter* PATERSON.

*Pat.* Joy to you, sir Benjamin! all joy attend you both! the bridegroom by this time is arrived; we saw his equipage enter the avenue, as ours drove into the court.

*Sir Ben.* Mr Paterson, sir, I know not if yet your friend is to be a bridegroom. I find my daughter here so cold and uncomplying, for my own part, I don't know how I shall look Mr Belfield in the face.

*Pat.* Fear nothing, sir Benjamin: make haste and receive your son-in-law. I have news to communicate to Miss Dove, which, I am confident, will dispose her to comply with your wishes.

*Sir Ben.* Well, sir, I shall leave her to your tutorage. This obliging gentleman undertakes not only for my wife, but my daughter, too.

[*Exit* SIR BEN.

*Sophia.* I am surprized, Mr Paterson——

*Pat.* Hold, madam, for one moment: I have made a discovery of the last importance to your welfare: you are in an error with regard to young Belfield—Violetta, the lady you believed him married to, is here in the house. I have brought her hither at your request, and from her I learn that the elder brother is her husband; he, who, this very morning, but for my discovery, had been your's also.

*Sophia.* What's this you tell me, sir? Where is this lady? where is Violetta? where is young Belfield?

*Pat.* Violetta, madam, I have put under safe convoy, and by this time your waiting-woman has lodged her privately in the closet of your bedchamber: there you will find her, and learn the whole process of this providential escape. I'll only speak a word to sir Benjamin, and come to you without any further delay.

[*Exit* SOPHIA.

*Enter* SIR BENJAMIN DOVE *and* BELFIELD *sen.*

*Sir Ben.* Well, Mr Paterson, what says my daughter?

*Pat.* Every thing that becomes an obedient daughter to say; so that, if this gentleman is not made completely happy within this hour, the fault will lie at his door, and not with Miss Sophia.

*Sir Ben.* This is good news, Paterson; but I am impatient to have the ceremony concluded; the bells are ringing, the parson is waiting, and the equipages are at the door. Step up to Sophia, and tell her to hasten; and hark'e, my friend? as you go by lady Dove's door, give her a call—do you mind me, only a call at the door: don't you go in; she's busy at work upon a large parcel of ribbands, which I've given her to make into wedding favours. She'll be very angry if you go into her chamber. Go, go, get you gone.

[*Exit* PATERSON.

*Bel. sen.* How comes it to pass, sir Benjamin, that Mr Paterson becomes so necessary an agent in the female affairs of your family? I confess to you my pride is wounded, when I find I am to thank him for your daughter's consent to marry me. The man that can prevail upon a woman to act against her liking, what may he not persuade her to do with it?

*Sir Ben.* Your remark is just. Paterson has certainly some secret faculty of persuasion; and all that can be said is, that 'tis better to see your danger before marriage, than to be feeling it out, as I have done, afterwards.

*Enter* CAPTAIN IRONSIDES, *and* BELFIELD *jun.*

*Sir Ben.* What, old acquaintance, are you come to rejoice with me on this occasion?—Bob Belfield, too, as I live! you are both heartily welcome—I could have spared their visit notwithstanding. [*Aside.*

*Bel. sen.* My brother here! vexation!

*Bel. jun.* Sir Benjamin, I come now to claim your promise of one hour's conversation with your daughter?

*Sir Ben.* The devil you do!

*Bel. sen.* Ridiculous!

*Bel. jun.* To you, sir, obligations of this sort may be matter of ridicule; but while I religiously observe all promises I make to others, I shall expect others to be as observant of those they make to me.

*Bel. sen.* Sir, I have a most profound veneration for your principles, and am happy to find your understanding so much cultivated by travel—but, in spite of your address, you will find it rather difficult to induce me to wave my right to Miss Dove, in favour of a professed adventurer.

*Bel. jun.* Shameless, unfeeling man! an adventurer, do you call me? You, whose unbrotherly persecution drove me to this hazardous, this humiliating occupation?

*Iron.* Sirrah! Bob! no reflections upon privateering—it has lined your pockets well, you young rogue; and you may tell your fine brother there, that we have landed treasure enough upon his estate to buy the fee-simple of it: ay, and for what I know, of sir Wiseacre's here into the bargain.

*Sir Ben.* What's that you say, captain Ironsides? Let's have a word in a corner with you.

*Bel. sen.* Look'e, sir, if you conceive yourself wronged by me, there is but one way—You know your remedy.

*Bel. jun.* I know your meaning, brother; and to demonstrate how much greater my courage is than yours, I must confess to you, I dare not accept your proposal.

*Sir Ben.* No, no; I have given him enough of that, I believe.

*Iron.* Bob Belfield, if I did not know thee for a lad of mettle, I shou'dn't tell what to make of all this: for my own part, I understand none of your scruples and refinements, not I—a man is a man—and if I take care to give an affront to no man, I think I have a right to take an affront from no man.

*Sir Ben.* Come, gentlemen, suspend your dispute. Here comes my daughter; let her decide betwixt you.

*Bel. jun.* Let me receive my sentence from her lips, and I will submit to it.

*Enter* SOPHIA, PATERSON, *and* LADY DOVE.

*Sir Ben.* Here's a young gentleman, daughter, that will take no denial; he comes to forbid the banns, just when you are both going into the church to be married.

*Sophia.* Upon my word, this is something extraordinary! What are the gentleman's reasons for this behaviour?

*Sir Ben.* He claims a sort of promise from me, that he should be indulged in an hour's conversation with you, before you give your hand to his brother.

*Sophia.* An hour's conversation! What little that gentleman can have to say to me, I believe, may be said in a very few minutes.

*Bel. sen.* I think, brother, this conversation don't promise a great deal.

*Sophia.* In the first place, then, I own to this gentleman, and the company present, that there was a time, when I entertained the highest opinion of his merit. Nay, I will not scruple to confess, that I had conceived a regard for him of the tenderest sort.

*Iron.* And pray, young lady, how came my nephew to forfeit your good opinion?

*Sophia.* By a conduct, sir, that must for ever forfeit not my esteem only, but yours, and all mankind's: I am sorry to be his accuser, but I will appeal to you, Mr Belfield, who are his brother, whether it is reconcileable, either to honour or humanity, to prosecute an affair of marriage with one woman, when you are previously and indispensably engaged to another?

*Bel. sen.* Hum!

*Sophia.* Yet this, sir, is the treatment I have received: judge, therefore, if I can desire or consent to have any long conversation with a gentleman, who is under such engagements; nay, whom I can prove actually married to another woman in this very house, and ready to vouch the truth of what I assert. Judge for me, Mr Belfield, could you believe any man capable of such complicated, such inconceivable villainy?

*Bel. sen.* Heavens! This touches me too closely.

*Sir Ben.* Sir, I would fain know what excuse you can have for this behaviour? I can tell you, sir, I don't understand it.

*Lady Dove.* Oh! fie! fie upon you, Mr Belfield! I wonder you are not ashamed to show your face in this family.

*Sir Ben.* Who desired you to put in your oar?

*Iron.* Why, sirrah, would not one wife content you? 'Tis enough in all reason for one man; is it not, sir Benjamin?

*Bel. jun.* Sir, when it is proved I am married, accuse me.

*Iron.* Look'e, Bob, I don't accuse you for marrying; 'twas an indiscretion, and I can forgive it—but to deny it, is a meanness, and I abhor it.

*Sophia.* Mr Belfield, do you say nothing upon this occasion!

*Bel. sen.* Paterson, I am struck to the heart—I cannot support my guilt—I am married to Violetta—save me the confusion of relating it: this dishonourable engagement for ever I renounce; nor will I rest till I have made atonement to an injured wife. Madam, I beg leave to withdraw for a few minutes.

*Bel. jun.* Hold, sir! this contrivance is of your forging—you have touched me too near—and now, if you dare draw your sword, follow me!

*Sophia.* Hold, gentlemen! you forget the lady is now in the house—she is a witness that will effectually put an end to your dispute—I will conduct her hither. [*Exit* SOPHIA.

*Bel. jun.* I agree to it.

*Iron.* Hark'e, nephew? I shrewdly suspect you have been laying a train to blow yourself up: if once Bob comes fairly alongside of you, you'll find your quarters too hot to hold you: I never yet found my boy out in a lie, and shan't tamely see a lie imposed upon him; for while he is honest, and I have breath, he shall never want a friend to stand by him, or a father to protect him.

*Bel. sen.* Mr Paterson, explain my story—I will depart this instant in search of Violetta.

*Enter* SOPHIA *and* VIOLETTA.

*Sophia.* Stay! I conjure you—stay, turn, and look back upon this lady, before you go.

[*Presenting* VIOLETTA.

*Bel. sen.* My wife!

*Sir Ben.* Hey-day! here's a turn.

*Iron.* I thought how 'twould be.

*Vio.* Yes, sir, your faithful, your forsaken wife.

*Bel. sen.* How shall I look upon you? What shall I say? Where shall I hide my confusion? Oh! take me to your arms, and, in that soft shelter, let me find forgiveness and protection.

*Vio.* Be this your only punishment! and this!

*Bel. jun.* Was it, then, a sister I preserved from death?

*Bel. sen.* What's this I hear! Oh! brother, can you pardon, too?

*Bel. jun.* Be indeed a brother, and let this providential event be the renovation of our friendship.

*Bel. sen.* What shall I say to you, madam?—[*To* SOPHIA.] Paterson, you know my heart: bear witness to its remorse. By Heaven, my secret resolution was, instantly to have departed in search of this my injured wife—but I'm not worthy even of your resentment: here is one that merits, and returns your love.

[*Turning to his brother.*

*Iron.* Come, god-daughter, we can never say the fleet's fairly come to an anchor, while the admiral's ship is out at sea. [*Presenting* BELFIELD *junior.*] My nephew here is as honest a lad as lives, and loves you at the soul of him: give him your hand, and I'll broach the last chest of dollars, to make him a fortune deserving you.—What say you, my old friend?

*Sir Ben.* Here's my hand! I've spoke the word—she's his own. Lady Dove, I won't hear a syllable to the contrary.

*Iron.* Then, the galleon is thy own, boy——What should an old fellow like me do with money? Give me a warm night-cap, a tiff of punch, and an elbow-chair in your chimney-corner, and I'll lay up for the rest of my days.

*Bel. jun.* How shall I give utterance to my gratitude, or my love!

*Enter* GOODWIN, FANNY, FRANCIS, PHILIP, *and* LUCY.

*Sir Ben.* So, so! more work for the parson!

*Iron.* What, Francis! hast thou chosen a mate, and art bound upon a matrimonial cruize, as well as thy master?

*Fran.* Ay, sir; so he is happy as well as myself, and has no objection to my choice.

*Bel. sen.* What! Are you all assembled to overwhelm me with confusion? Like some poor culprit, surrounded by a crowd of witnesses, I stand convicted and appalled. But all your wrongs shall be redressed—yours, Goodwin—Philip's—Lucy's: my whole life shall be employed in acts of justice and atonement. Virtue, and this virtuous woman, were my first ruling passions.

Now they resume their social, soft controul,
And love and happiness possess my soul.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

# THE

# WEST INDIAN.

BY

*CUMBERLAND.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### MEN.

STOCKWELL, *a merchant, father to* BELCOUR.
BELCOUR, *the West Indian, attached to* LOUISA.
CAPTAIN DUDLEY, *an old officer on half-pay.*
CHARLES DUDLEY, *his son, attached to* CHARLOTTE RUSPORT.
MAJOR O'FLAHERTY, *an Irishman.*
STUKELY, *principal clerk to* STOCKWELL.
FULMER.
VARLAND, *a lawyer.*
*Sailor.*
*Servant to* STOCKWELL.
*Servant to* LADY RUSPORT.

### WOMEN.

LADY RUSPORT, *attached to* MAJOR O'FLAHERTY.
CHARLOTTE, *her daughter.*
LOUISA, *daughter to* DUDLEY.
MRS FULMER, *wife to* FULMER.
LUCY, *maid to* CHARLOTTE RUSPORT.
*Housekeeper belonging to* STOCKWELL.

*Clerks belonging to* STOCKWELL, *Servants, Sailors, Negroes, &c.*

*Scene—London.*

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—*A merchant's counting-house.*

*In an inner room, set off by glass-doors, are discovered several clerks, employed at their desks. A writing-table in the front room.* STOCKWELL *is discovered, reading a letter;* STUKELY *comes gently out of the back room, and observes him some time before he speaks.*

*Stuke.* HE seems disordered: something in that letter, and I'm afraid of an unpleasant sort. He has many ventures of great account at sea; a ship richly freighted for Barcelona; another for Lisbon; and others expected from Cadiz, of still greater value. Besides these, I know he has many deep concerns in foreign bottoms, and underwritings to a vast amount. I'll accost him.——Sir! Mr Stockwell!

*Stock.* Stukely!——Well, have you shipped the cloths?

*Stuke.* I have, sir; here's the bill of lading, and copy of the invoice: the assortments are all compared: Mr Traffick will give you the policy upon 'Change.

*Stock.* 'Tis very well; lay these papers by; and no more of business for a while. Shut the door, Stukely. I have had long proof of your friendship and fidelity to me; a matter of most infinite concern lies on my mind, and 'twill be a sensible relief to unbosom myself to you. I have just now been informed of the arrival of the young West

Indian, I have so long been expecting; you know whom I mean?

*Stuke.* Yes, sir; Mr Belcour, the young gentleman who inherited old Belcour's great estates in Jamaica.

*Stock.* Hush, not so loud; come a little nearer this way. This Belcour is now in London; part of his baggage is already arrived; and I expect him every minute. Is it to be wondered at, if his coming throws me into some agitation, when I tell you, Stukely, he is my son!

*Stuke.* Your son!

*Stock.* Yes, sir, my only son. Early in life I accompanied his grandfather to Jamaica, as his clerk; he had an only daughter, somewhat older than myself, the mother of this gentleman: it was my chance (call it good or ill) to engage her affections; and, as the inferiority of my condition made it hopeless to expect her father's consent, her fondness provided an expedient, and we were privately married: the issue of that concealed engagement is, as I have told you, this Belcour.

*Stuke.* That event, surely, discovered your connexion?

*Stock.* You shall hear. Not many days after our marriage, old Belcour set out for England; and, during his abode here, my wife was, with great secrecy, delivered of this son. Fruitful in expedients to disguise her situation, without parting from her infant, she contrived to have it laid and received at her door as a foundling. After some time, her father returned, having left me here; in one of those favourable moments, that decide the fortunes of prosperous men, this child was introduced: from that instant, he treated him as his own, gave him his name, and brought him up in his family.

*Stuke.* And did you never reveal this secret, either to old Belcour, or your son.

*Stock.* Never.

*Stuke.* Therein you surprise me; a merchant of your eminence, and a member of the British parliament, might surely aspire, without offence, to the daughter of a planter. In this case, too, natural affection would prompt to a discovery.

*Stock.* Your remark is obvious; nor could I have persisted in this painful silence, but in obedience to the dying injunctions of a beloved wife. The letter, you found me reading, conveyed those injunctions to me; it was dictated in her last illness, and almost in the article of death (you'll spare me the recital of it); she there conjures me, in terms as solemn as they are affecting, never to reveal the secret of our marriage, or withdraw my son, while her father survived.

*Stuke.* But on what motives did your unhappy lady found these injunctions?

*Stock.* Principally, I believe, from apprehension on my account, lest old Belcour, on whom, at her decease, I wholly depended, should withdraw his protection: in part, from consideration of his repose, as well knowing the discovery would deeply affect his spirit, which was haughty, vehement, and unforgiving: and lastly, in regard to the interest of her infant, whom he had warmly adopted, and for whom, in case of a discovery, every thing was to be dreaded from his resentment. And, indeed, though the alteration in my condition might have justified me in discovering myself, yet I always thought my son safer in trusting to the caprice, than to the justice, of his grandfather. My judgment has not suffered by the event; old Belcour is dead, and has bequeathed his whole estate to him we are speaking of.

*Stuke.* Now, then, you are no longer bound to secrecy.

*Stock.* True: but before I publicly reveal myself, I could wish to make some experiment of my son's disposition. This can only be done by letting his spirit take its course without restraint; by these means, I think I shall discover much more of his real character, under the title of his merchant, than I should under that of his father.

*A Sailor enters, ushering in several black servants, carrying portmanteaus, trunks, &c.*

*Sai.* Save your honour—is your name Stockwell, pray?

*Stock.* It is.

*Sai.* Part of my master Belcour's baggage, an't please you: there's another cargo not far a-stern of us, and the cock-swain has got charge of the dumb creatures.

*Stock.* Prithee, friend, what dumb creatures do you speak of? has Mr Belcour brought over a collection of wild beasts?

*Sai.* No, lord love him! no, not he: let me see; there's two green monkies, a pair of grey parrots, a Jamaica sow and pigs, and a Mangrove dog; that's all.

*Stock.* Is that all?

*Sai.* Yes, your honour; yes, that's all; bless his heart, a'might have brought over the whole island if he would; a didn't leave a dry eye in it.

*Stock.* Indeed! Stukely, shew them where to bestow their baggage. Follow that gentleman.

*Sai.* Come, bear a hand, my lads; bear a hand.

[*Exit with* STUKELY *and servants.*

*Stock.* If the principal tallies with his purveyors, he must be a singular spectacle in this place: he has a friend, however, in this sea-faring fellow: 'tis no bad prognostic of a man's heart, when his shipmates give him a good word. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to a drawing-room.*

*A servant discovered setting the chairs by, &c. A woman servant enters to him.*

*House.* Why, what a fuss does our good master put himself in about this West Indian! See what a bill of fare I've been forced to draw out: seven and nine, I'll assure you, and only a family dinner, as he calls it: why, if my lord mayor was

expected, there couldn't be a greater to do about him.

*Ser.* I wish to my heart you had but seen the loads of trunks, boxes, and portmanteaus he has sent hither. An ambassador's baggage, with all the smuggled goods of his family, does not exceed it.

*House.* A fine pickle he'll put the house into! had he been master's own son, and a Christian Englishman, there couldn't be more rout than there is about this Creolian, as they call them.

*Ser.* No matter for that; he's very rich, and that's sufficient. They say he has rum and sugar enough belonging to him, to make all the water in the Thames into punch. But I see my master's coming. [*Exeunt.*

STOCKWELL *enters, followed by a Servant.*

*Stock.* Where is Mr Belcour? Who brought this note from him?

*Ser.* A waiter from the London tavern, sir; he says the young gentleman is just dressed, and will be with you directly.

*Stock.* Shew him in when he arrives.

*Ser.* I shall, sir. I'll have a peep at him first, however; I've a great mind to see this outlandish spark. The sailor fellow says he'll make rare doings amongst us. [*Aside.*

*Stock.* You need not wait—leave me. [*Exit Servant.*] Let me see——— [*Reads.*

'SIR,

'I write to you under the hands of the hair-'dresser. As soon as I have made myself decent, 'and slipped on some fresh clothes, I will have 'the honour of paying you my devoirs.

'Yours,

BELCOUR.'

He writes at his ease; for he's unconscious to whom his letter is addressed; but what a palpitation does it throw my heart into! a father's heart! 'Tis an affecting interview; when my eyes meet a son, whom yet they never saw, where shall I find constancy to support it? Should he resemble his mother, I am overthrown. All the letters I have had from him (for I industriously drew him into a correspondence with me), bespeak him of quick and ready understanding.—All the reports I ever received, give me favourable impressions of his character; wild, perhaps, as the manner of his country is; but, I trust, not frantic or unprincipled.

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Sir, the foreign gentleman is come.

*Enter another Servant.*

*Ser.* Mr Belcour.

BELCOUR *enters.*

*Stock.* Mr Belcour, I'm rejoiced to see you; you're welcome to England.

*Bel.* I thank you heartily, good Mr Stockwell: you and I have long conversed at a distance; now we are met; and the pleasure this meeting gives me, amply compensates for the perils I have run through in accomplishing it.

*Stock.* What perils, Mr Belcour? I could not have thought you would have made a bad passage at this time o' year.

*Bel.* Nor did we: courier-like, we came posting to your shores, upon the pinions of the swiftest gales that ever blew; 'tis upon English ground all my difficulties have arisen; 'tis the passage from the river-side I complain of.

*Stock.* Ay, indeed! What obstructions can you have met between this and the river-side?

*Bel.* Innumerable! Your town's as full of defiles as the island of Corsica; and, I believe, they are as obstinately defended: so much hurry, bustle, and confusion on our quays; so many sugar-casks, porter-butts, and common-councilmen in your streets, that, unless a man marched with artillery in his front, 'tis more than the labour of a Hercules can effect, to make any tolerable way through your town.

*Stock.* I am sorry you have been so incommoded.

*Bel.* Why, faith, 'twas all my own fault. Accustomed to a land of slaves, and out of patience with the whole tribe of custom-house extortioners, boatmen, tide-waiters, and water-bailiffs, that beset me on all sides, worse than a swarm of musquetoes, I proceeded a little too roughly to brush them away with my rattan: the sturdy rogues took this in dudgeon, and beginning to rebel, the mob chose different sides, and a furious scuffle ensued; in the course of which, my person and apparel suffered so much, that I was obliged to step into the first tavern to refit, before I could make my approaches in any decent trim.

*Stock.* All without is as I wish; dear Nature, add the rest, and I am happy! [*Aside.*] Well, Mr Belcour, 'tis a rough sample you have had of my countrymen's spirit; but, I trust, you'll not think the worse of them for it.

*Bel.* Not at all, not at all; I like them the better. Was I only a visitor, I might, perhaps, wish them a little more tractable; but, as a fellow subject, and a sharer in their freedom, I applaud their spirit, though I feel the effects of it in every bone of my skin.

*Stock.* That's well; I like that well. How gladly I could fall upon his neck, and own myself his father! [*Aside.*

*Bel.* Well, Mr Stockwell, for the first time in my life, here am I in England; at the fountain head of pleasure, in the land of beauty, of arts, and elegancies. My happy stars have given me

a good estate, and the conspiring winds have blown me hither to spend it.

*Stock.* To use it, not to waste it, I should hope; to treat it, Mr Belcour, not as a vassal, over whom you have a wanton and despotic power; but as a subject, which you are bound to govern with a temperate and restrained authority.

*Bel.* True, sir; most truly said! Mine's a commission, not a right: I am the offspring of distress, and every child of sorrow is my brother. While I have hands to hold, therefore, I will hold them open to mankind: but, sir, my passions are my masters; they take me where they will; and oftentimes they leave to reason and to virtue nothing but my wishes and my sighs.

*Stock.* Come, come; the man, who can accuse, corrects himself.

*Bel.* Ah! that's an office I am weary of: I wish a friend would take it up: I would to Heaven you had leisure for the employ! but did you drive a trade to the four corners of the world, you would not find the task so toilsome as to keep me free from faults.

*Stock.* Well, I am not discouraged: this candour tells me, I should not have the fault of self-conceit to combat; that, at least, is not among the number.

*Bel.* No; if I knew that man on earth, who thought more humbly of me than I do of myself, I would take up his opinion, and forego my own.

*Stock.* And, was I to choose a pupil, it should be one of your complexion: so, if you will come along with me, we'll agree upon your admission, and enter on a course of lectures directly.

*Bel.* With all my heart. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to a room in* LADY RUSPORT'S *house.*

*Enter* LADY RUSPORT *and* CHARLOTTE.

*Lady Rus.* Miss Rusport, I desire to hear no more of captain Dudley and his destitute family: not a shilling of mine shall ever cross the hands of any of them: because my sister chose to marry a beggar, am I bound to support him and his posterity?

*Char.* I think you are.

*Lady Rus.* You think I am? and, pray, where do you find the law that tells you so?

*Char.* I am not proficient enough to quote chapter and verse; but I take charity to be a main clause in the great statute of Christianity.

*Lady Rus.* I say charity, indeed! And pray, miss, are you sure that it is charity, pure charity, which moves you to plead for captain Dudley? Amongst all your pity, do you find no spice of a certain anti-spiritual passion, called love? Don't mistake yourself; you are no saint, child, believe me; and, I am apt to think, the distresses of old Dudley, and of his daughter into the bargain, would never break your heart, if there was not a certain young fellow of two and twenty in the case; who, by the happy recommendation of a good person, and the brilliant appointments of an ensigncy, will, if I am not mistaken, cozen you out of a fortune of twice twenty thousand pounds, as soon as ever you are of age to bestow it upon him.

*Char.* A nephew of your ladyship's can never want any other recommendation with me; and, if my partiality for Charles Dudley is acquitted by the rest of the world, I hope lady Rusport will not condemn me for it.

*Lady Rus.* I condemn you! I thank Heaven, Miss Rusport, I am no ways responsible for your conduct; nor is it any concern of mine how you dispose of yourself: you are not my daughter; and, when I married your father, poor sir Stephen Rusport, I found you a forward, spoiled miss of fourteen, far above being instructed by me.

*Char.* Perhaps, your ladyship calls this instruction?

*Lady Rus.* You're strangely pert; but 'tis no wonder. Your mother, I am told, was a fine lady; and according to the modern style of education you was brought up. It was not so in my young days; there was, then, some decorum in the world, some subordination, as the great Locke expresses it. Oh! it was an edifying sight, to see the regular deportment observed in our family: no giggling, no gossiping was going on there; my good father, sir Oliver Roundhead, never was seen to laugh himself, nor ever allowed it in his children.

*Char.* Ay; those were happy times, indeed!

*Lady Rus.* But, in this forward age, we have coquettes in the egg-shell, and philosophers in the cradle; girls of fifteen, that lead the fashion in new caps and new opinions; that have their sentiments and their sensations; and the idle fops encourage them in it. O' my conscience, I wonder what it is the men can see in such babies!

*Char.* True, madam: but all men do not overlook the maturer beauties of your ladyship's age; witness your admirer, Major Dennis O'Flaherty: there's an example of some discernment. I declare to you, when your ladyship is by, the major takes no more notice of me, than if I was part of the furniture of your chamber.

*Lady Rus.* The major, child, has travelled through various kingdoms and climates, and has more enlarged notions of female merit than falls to the lot of an English home-bred lover; in most other countries, no woman on your side forty would ever be named in a polite circle.

*Char.* Right, madam; I've been told, that in Vienna they have coquettes upon crutches, and Venuses in their grand climacteric: a lover there celebrates the wrinkles, not the dimples, in his mistress's face. The major, I think, has served in the Imperial army.

*Lady Rus.* Are you piqued, my young madam? Had my sister, Louisa, yielded to the addresses of one of Major O'Flaherty's person and appearance, she would have had some excuse: but to run away, as she did, at the age of sixteen too, with a man of old Dudley's sort——

*Char.* Was, in my opinion, the most venial trespass that ever girl of sixteen committed; of a noble family, an engaging person, strict honour, and sound understanding, what accomplishment was there wanting in Captain Dudley, but that which the prodigality of his ancestors had deprived him of?

*Lady Rus.* They left him as much as he deserves: Hasn't the old man captain's half pay? And is not the son an ensign?

*Char.* An ensign! Alas, poor Charles! Would to Heaven he knew what my heart feels and suffers, for his sake!

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Ensign Dudley, to wait upon your ladyship.

*Lady Rus.* Who? Dudley? What can have brought him to town?

*Char.* Dear madam, 'tis Charles Dudley; 'tis your nephew.

*Lady Rus.* Nephew! I renounce him as my nephew! Sir Oliver renounced him as his grandson. Wasn't he son of the eldest daughter, and only male descendant of sir Oliver? and didn't he cut him off with a shilling? Didn't the poor, dear, good man leave his whole fortune to me, except a small annuity to my maiden sister, who spoiled her constitution with nursing him? And, depend upon it, not a penny of that fortune shall ever be disposed of otherwise, than according to the will of the donor.

*Enter* CHARLES DUDLEY.

So, young man, whence come you? What brings you to town?

*Charles.* If there is any offence in my coming to town, your ladyship is in some degree responsible for it; for part of my errand was to pay my duty here.

*Lady Rus.* I hope you have some better excuse than all this.

*Charles.* 'Tis true, madam, I have other motives; but, if I consider my trouble repaid by the pleasnre I now enjoy, I should hope my aunt would not think my company the less welcome for the value I set upon hers.

*Lady Rus.* Coxcomb! And where is your father, child? and your sister? Are they in town, too?

*Charles.* They are.

*Lady Rus.* Ridiculous! I don't know what people do in London, who have no money to spend in it.

*Char.* Dear madam, speak more kindly to your nephew; how can you oppress a youth of his sensibility?

*Lady Rus.* Miss Rusport, I insist upon your retiring to your apartment: when I want your advice, I'll send to you. [*Exit* CHARLOTTE.] So, you have put on a red coat, too, as well as your father? 'tis plain what value you set upon the good advice sir Oliver used to give you: how often has he cautioned you against the army?

*Charles.* Had it pleased my grandfather to enable me to have obeyed his caution, I would have done it; but you well know how destitute I am; and 'tis not to be wondered at, if I prefer the service of my king to that of any other master.

*Lady Rus.* Well, well; take your own course; 'tis no concern of mine: you never consulted me.

*Charles.* I frequently wrote to your ladyship, but could obtain no answer; and, since my grandfather's death, this is the first opportunity I have had of waiting upon you.

*Lady Rus.* I must desire you not to mention the death of that dear good man in my hearing; my spirits cannot support it.

*Charles.* I shall obey you: permit me to say, that, as that event has richly supplied you with the materials of bounty, the distresses of my family can furnish you with objects of it.

*Lady Rus.* The distresses of your family, child, are quite out of the question at present: had sir Oliver been pleased to consider them, I should have been well content; but he has absolutely taken no notice of you in his will, and that, to me, must and shall be a law. Tell your father and your sister I totally disapprove of their coming up to town.

*Charles.* Must I tell my father that, before your ladyship knows the motive that brought him hither?——Allured by the offer of exchanging for a commission on full pay, the veteran, after thirty years service, prepares to encounter the fatal heats of Senegambia; but wants a small supply to equip him for the expedition.

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Major O'Flaherty, to wait on your ladyship.

*Enter* MAJOR O'FLAHERTY.

*O'Fla.* Spare your speeches, young man; don't you think her ladyship can take my word for that? I hope, madam, 'tis evidence enough of my being present, when I've the honour of telling you so myself.

*Lady Rus.* Major O'Flaherty, I am rejoiced to see you. Nephew Dudley, you perceive I'm engaged.

*Charles.* I shall not intrude upon your ladyship's more agreeable engagements. I presume I have my answer.

*Lady Rus.* Your answer, child! What answer can you possibly expect? or how can your ro-

mantic father suppose that I am to abet him in all his idle and extravagant undertakings? Come, major, let me shew you the way into my dressing-room, and let us leave this young adventurer to his meditation. [*Exit.*

*O'Fla.* I follow you, my lady. Young gentleman, your obedient! Upon my conscience, as fine a young fellow as I would wish to clap my eyes on: he might have answered my salute, however—well, let it pass: fortune, perhaps, frowns upon the poor lad; she's a damned slippery lady, and very apt to jilt us poor fellows, that wear cockades in our hats. Fare thee well, honey, whoever thou art. [*Exit.*

*Charles.* So much for the virtues of a puritan! Out upon it! her heart is flint; yet that woman, that aunt of mine, without one worthy particle in her composition, would, I dare be sworn, as soon set her foot in a pest house as in a play-house. [*Going.*

MISS RUSPORT *enters to him.*

*Char.* Stop, stay a little, Charles; whither are you going in such haste?

*Charles.* Madam! Miss Rusport! what are your commands?

*Char.* Why so reserved? We had used to answer to no other names than those of Charles and Charlotte.

*Charles.* What ails you? You have been weeping.

*Char.* No, no; or if I have——your eyes are full, too. But I have a thousand things to say to you. Before you go, tell me, I conjure you, where you are to be found; here, write me your direction; write it upon the back of this visiting-ticket——Have you a pencil?

*Charles.* I have: but why should you desire to find us out? 'tis a poor, little, inconvenient place; my sister has no apartment fit to receive you in.

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Madam, my lady desires your company directly.

*Char.* I am coming—well, have you wrote it? Give it me. O Charles! either you do not, or you will not, understand me. [*Exeunt severally.*

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.—*A room in* FULMER'S *house.*

*Enter* FULMER *and* MRS FULMER.

*Mrs Ful.* WHY, how you sit, musing and moping, sighing and desponding! I'm ashamed of you, Mr Fulmer: is this the country you described to me, a second Eldorado, rivers of gold and rocks of diamonds? You found me in a pretty snug retired way of life at Boulogne, out of the noise and bustle of the world, and wholly at my ease; you, indeed, was upon the wing, with a fiery persecution at your back: but, like a true son of Loyola, you had then a thousand ingenious devices to repair your fortune: and this, your native country, was to be the scene of your performances: fool that I was, to be inveigled into it by you! but, thank Heaven, our partnership is revocable. I am not your wedded wife, praised be my stars! for what have we got, whom have we gulled, but ourselves? which of all your trains has taken fire? even this poor expedient of your bookseller's shop seems abandoned; for if a chance customer drops in, who is there, pray, to help him to what he wants?

*Ful.* Patty, you know it is not upon slight grounds that I despair; there had used to be a livelihood to be picked up in this country, both for the honest and dishonest: I have tried each walk, and am likely to starve at last: there is not a point to which the wit and faculty of man can turn, that I have not set mine to; but in vain, I am beat through every quarter of the compass.

*Mrs Ful.* Ah! common efforts all; strike me a master-stroke, Mr Fulmer, if you wish to make any figure in this country.

*Ful.* But where, how, and what? I have blustered for prerogative; I have bellowed for freedom; I have offered to serve my country; I have engaged to betray it. A master-stroke, truly! why, I have talked treason, writ treason; and, if a man can't live by that, he can live by nothing. Here I set up as a bookseller, why men left off reading; and, if I was to turn butcher, I believe, on my conscience, they'd leave off eating.

CAPTAIN DUDLEY *crosses the stage.*

*Mrs Ful.* Why, there now's your lodger, old captain Dudley, as he calls himself; there's no flint without fire; something might be struck out of him, if you had the wit to find the way.

*Ful.* Hang him, an old dry-skinned curmudgeon! you may as well think to get truth out of a courtier, or candour out of a critic: I can make nothing of him; besides, he's poor, and therefore not for our purpose.

*Mrs Ful.* The more fool he! Would any man be poor that had such a prodigy in his possession?

*Ful.* His daughter, you mean? she is, indeed, uncommonly beautiful.

*Mrs Ful.* Beautiful! Why, she need only be seen, to have the first men in the kingdom at her feet. Egad, I wish I had the leasing of her beauty; what would some of our young nabobs give——

*Ful.* Hush! here comes the captain; good

girl, leave us to ourselves, and let me try what I can make of him.

*Mrs Ful.* Captain, truly! i'faith, I'd have a regiment, had I such a daughter, before I was three months older. [*Exit* MRS FUL.

*Enter* CAPTAIN DUDLEY.

*Ful.* Captain Dudley, good morning to you!

*Dud.* Mr Fulmer, I have borrowed a book from your shop; 'tis the sixth volume of my deceased friend Tristram: he is a flattering writer to us poor soldiers; and the divine story of Le Fevre, which makes part of this book, in my opinion of it, does honour, not to its author only, but to human nature.

*Ful.* He's an author I keep in the way of trade, but one I never relished: he is much too loose and profligate for my taste.

*Dud.* That's being too severe: I hold him to be a moralist in the noblest sense: he plays, indeed, with the fancy, and sometimes, perhaps, too wantonly; but, while he thus designedly masks his main attack, he comes at once upon the heart; refines, amends it, softens it; beats down each selfish barrier from about it, and opens every sluice of pity and benevolence.

*Ful.* We of the catholic persuasion are not much bound to him.——Well, sir, I shall not oppose your opinion; a favourite author is like a favourite mistress; and there, you know, captain, no man likes to have his taste arraigned.

*Dud.* Upon my word, sir, I don't know what a man likes in that case; 'tis an experiment I never made.

*Ful.* Sir!—Are you serious?

*Dud.* 'Tis of little consequence whether you think so.

*Ful.* What a formal old prig it is! [*Aside.*] I apprehend you, sir; you speak with caution; you are married?

*Dud.* I have been.

*Ful.* And this young lady, which accompanies you—

*Dud.* Passes for my daughter.

*Ful.* Passes for his daughter! humph—[*Aside.*] She is exceedingly beautiful, finely accomplished, of a most enchanting shape and air.

*Dud.* You are much too partial; she has the greatest defect a woman can have.

*Ful.* How so, pray?

*Dud.* She has no fortune.

*Ful.* Rather say that you have none; and that's a sore defect in one of your years, Captain Dudley: you've served, no doubt?

*Dud.* Familiar coxcomb! But I'll humour him. [*Aside.*

*Ful.* A close old fox! But I'll unkennel him. [*Aside.*

*Dud.* Above thirty years I've been in the service, Mr Fulmer.

*Ful.* I guessed as much; I laid it at no less: why, 'tis a wearisome time; 'tis an apprenticeship to a profession, fit only for a patriarch. But preferment must be closely followed: you never could have been so far behind-hand in the chase, unless you had palpably mistaken your way. You'll pardon me; but I begin to perceive you have lived in the world, not with it.

*Dud.* It may be so; and you, perhaps, can give me better council. I'm now soliciting a favour; an exchange to a company on full pay; nothing more; and yet I meet a thousand bars to that; though, without boasting, I should think the certificate of services, which I sent in, might have purchased that indulgence to me.

*Ful.* Who thinks or cares about them? Certificate of services, indeed! Send in a certificate of your fair daughter; carry her in your hand with you.

*Dud.* What! Who? My daughter! Carry my daughter! Well, and what then?

*Ful.* Why, then your fortune's made, that's all.

*Dud.* I understand you: and this you call knowledge of the world? Despicable knowledge! but, sirrah, I will have you know——— [*Threatening him.*

*Ful.* Help! Who's within? Would you strike me, sir? Would you lift your hand against a man in his own house?

*Dud.* In a church, if he dare insult the poverty of a man of honour.

*Ful.* Have a care what you do! remember there is such a thing in law as an assault and battery; ay, and such trifling forms as warrants and indictments.

*Dud.* Go, sir; you are too mean for my resentment: 'tis that, and not the law, protects you. ——Hence!

*Ful.* An old, absurd, incorrigible blockhead! I'll be revenged of him. [*Aside.*

[*Exit* FUL.

*Enter* CHARLES DUDLEY.

*Cha.* What is the matter, sir? Sure I heard an outcry as I entered the house?

*Dud.* Not unlikely; our landlord and his wife are for ever wrangling.—Did you find your aunt Dudley at home?

*Cha.* I did.

*Dud.* And what was your reception?

*Cha.* Cold as our poverty, and her pride, could make it.

*Dud.* You told her the pressing occasion I had for a small supply to equip me for this exchange; has she granted me the relief I asked?

*Cha.* Alas, sir, she has peremptorily refused it.

*Dud.* That's hard: that's hard, indeed! My petition was for a small sum; she has refused it, you say? well, be it so; I must not complain. Did you see the broker about the insurance on my life?

*Cha.* There, again, I am the messenger of ill

news; I can raise no money, so fatal is the climate: alas, that ever my father should be sent to perish in such a place!

LOUISA *enters hastily.*

*Dud.* Louisa, what's the matter? you seem frightened!

*Lou.* I am, indeed: coming from Miss Rusport's, I met a young gentleman in the streets, who has beset me in the strangest manner.

*Cha.* Insufferable! was he rude to you?

*Lou.* I cannot say he was absolutely rude to me, but he was very importunate to speak to me, and once or twice attempted to lift up my hat: he followed me to the corner of the street, and there I gave him the slip.

*Dud.* You must walk no more in the streets, child, without me or your brother.

*Lou.* O, Charles, Miss Rusport desires to see you directly; lady Rusport is gone out, and she has something particular to say to you.

*Cha.* Have you any commands for me, sir?

*Dud.* None, my dear; by all means wait upon Miss Rusport. Come, Louisa, I shall desire you to go up to your chamber and compose yourself. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE III.

*Enter* BELCOUR, *after peeping in at the door.*

*Bel.* Not a soul, as I'm alive! Why, what an odd sort of a house is this! Confound the little jilt, she has fairly given me the slip. A plague upon this London, I shall have no luck in it: such a crowd, and such a hurry, and such a number of shops, and one so like the other, that whether the wench turned into this house or the next, or whether she went up stairs or down stairs (for there's a world above and a world below, it seems), I declare, I know no more than if I was in the Blue Mountains. In the name of all the devils at once, why did she run away? If every handsome girl I meet in this town is to lead me such a wild-goose chase, I had better have staid in the torrid zone. I shall be wasted to the size of a sugar-cane. What shall I do? give the chase up! Hang it, that's cowardly. Shall I, a true-born son of Phœbus, suffer this little nimble-footed Daphne to escape me?———Forbid it, honour, and forbid it, love.———Hush, hush——— here she comes.——Oh, the devil!——— What tawdry thing have we got here?——

*Enter* MRS FULMER.

*Mrs Ful.* Your humble servant, sir.

*Bel.* Your humble servant, madam.

*Mrs Ful.* A fine summer's day, sir.

*Bel.* Yes, madam, and so cool, that if the calendar did not call it July, I should swear it was January.

*Mrs Ful.* Sir!

*Bel.* Madam!

*Mrs Ful.* Do you wish to speak to Mr Fulmer, sir?

*Bel.* Mr Fulmer, madam? I have not the honour of knowing such a person.

*Mrs Ful.* No, I'll be sworn, have you not; thou art much too pretty a fellow, and too much of a gentleman, to be an author thyself, or to have any thing to say to those that are so. 'Tis the captain, I suppose, you are waiting for?

*Bel.* I rather suspect it is the captain's wife.

*Mrs Ful.* The captain has no wife, sir.

*Bel.* No wife! I'm heartily sorry for it; for then, she's his mistress; and that I take to be the more desperate case of the two. Pray, madam, was not there a lady just now turned into your house? 'Twas with her I wished to speak.

*Mrs Ful.* What sort of a lady, pray?

*Bel.* One of the loveliest sort my eyes ever beheld; young, tall, fresh, fair; in short, a goddess.

*Mrs Ful.* Nay, but dear, dear sir, now I'm sure you flatter: for 'twas me you followed into the shop-door this minute.

*Bel.* You! No, no, take my word for it, it was not you, madam.

*Mrs Ful.* But what is it you laugh at?

*Bel.* Upon my soul, I ask your pardon; but it was not you, believe me: be assured, it was not.

*Mrs Ful.* Well, sir, I shall not contend for the honour of being noticed by you; I hope you think you would not have been the first man that noticed me in the streets. However, this I'm positive of, that no living woman but myself has entered these doors this morning.

*Bel.* Why, then, I'm mistaken in the house, that's all; for 'tis not humanly possible I can be so far out in the lady. [*Going.*

*Mrs Ful.* Coxcomb! But hold—a thought occurs; as sure as can be, he has seen Miss Dudley. A word with you, young gentleman; come back.

*Bel.* Well, what's your pleasure?

*Mrs Ful.* You seem greatly captivated with this young lady; are you apt to fall in love thus at first sight?

*Bel.* Oh, yes: 'tis the only way I can ever fall in love: any man may tumble into a pit by surprise; none but a fool would walk into one by choice.

*Mrs Ful.* You are a hasty lover, it seems; have you spirit to be a generous one? They that will please the eye, must not spare the purse.

*Bel.* Try me; put me to the proof! bring me to an interview with the dear girl that has thus captivated me, and see whether I have spirit to be grateful.

*Mrs Ful.* But how, pray, am I to know the girl you have set your heart on?

*Bel.* By an indescribable grace, that accompanies every look and action that falls from her: there can be but one such woman in the world, and nobody can mistake that one.

*Mrs Ful.* Well, if I should stumble upon this

angel in my walks, where am I to find you? What's your name?

*Bel.* Upon my soul, I can't tell you my name.

*Mrs Ful.* Not tell me! Why so?

*Bel.* Because I don't know what it is myself; as yet, I have no name.

*Mrs Ful.* No name?

*Bel.* None; a friend, indeed, lent me his; but he forbad me to use it on any unworthy occasion.

*Mrs Ful.* But where is your place of abode?

*Bel.* I have none; I never slept a night in England in my life.

*Mrs Ful.* Hey-day!

*Enter* FULMER.

*Ful.* A fine case, truly, in a free country! a pretty pass things are come to, if a man is to be assaulted in his own house!

*Mrs Ful.* Who has assaulted you, my dear?

*Ful.* Who? why this captain Drawcansir, this old Dudley, my lodger: but I'll unlodge him; I'll unharbour him, I warrant.

*Mrs Ful.* Hush! hush! hold your tongue, man; pocket the affront, and be quiet; I've a scheme on foot will pay you a hundred beatings. Why, you surprise me, Mr Fulmer; Captain Dudley assault you? Impossible!

*Ful.* Nay, I can't call it an absolute assault; but he threatened me.

*Mrs Ful.* Oh, was that all? I thought how it would turn out——A likely thing, truly, for a person of his obliging compassionate turn! no, no, poor captain Dudley; he has sorrows and distresses enough of his own to employ his spirits, without setting them against other people. Make it up as fast as you can: watch this gentleman out; follow him wherever he goes; and bring me word who and what he is; be sure you don't lose sight of him; I've other business in hand.

[*Exit* MRS FUL.

*Bel.* Pray, sir, what sorrows and distresses have befallen this old gentleman you speak of?

*Ful.* Poverty, disappointment, and all the distresses attendant thereupon: sorrow enough of all conscience: I soon found how it was with him, by his way of living, low enough of all reason; but what I overheard this morning put it out of all doubt.

*Bel.* What did you overhear this morning?

*Ful.* Why, it seems he wants to join his regiment, and has been beating the town over to raise a little money for that purpose upon his pay; but the climate, I find, where he is going, is so unhealthy, that nobody can be found to lend him any.

*Bel.* Why then, your town is a damned good-for-nothing town: and I wish I had never come into it.

*Ful.* That's what I say, sir; the hard-heartedness of some folks is unaccountable. There's an old lady Rusport, a near relation of this gentleman's; she lives hard by here, opposite to Stockwell's, the great merchant; he sent to her a begging, but to no purpose; though she is as rich as a Jew, she would not furnish him with a farthing.

*Bel.* Is the captain at home?

*Ful.* He is up stairs, sir.

*Bel.* Will you take the trouble to desire him to step hither? I want to speak to him.

*Ful.* I'll send him to you directly. I don't know what to make of this young man; but, if I live, I will find him out, or know the reason why.

[*Exit* FUL.

*Bel.* I've lost the girl, it seems; that's clear: she was the first object of my pursuit; but the case of this poor officer touches me: and, after all, there may be as much true delight in rescuing a fellow-creature from distress, as there would be in plunging one into it——But, let me see——It's a point that must be managed with some delicacy——Apropos! there's pen and ink——I've struck upon a method that will do.—[*Writes.*]—Ay, ay, this is the very thing: 'twas devilish lucky I happened to have these bills about me. There, there, fare you well; I'm glad to be rid of you; you stood a chance of being worse applied, I can tell you.

[*Encloses and seals the paper.*

FULMER *brings in* CAPTAIN DUDLEY.

*Ful.* That's the gentleman, sir.—I shall make bold, however, to lend an ear. [*Exit* FUL.

*Dud.* Have you any commands for me, sir?

*Bel.* Your name is Dudley, sir?

*Dud.* It is.

*Bel.* You command a company, I think, Captain Dudley?

*Dud.* I did: I am now upon half-pay.

*Bel.* You've served some time?

*Dud.* A pretty many years; long enough to see some people of more merit, and better interest than myself, made general officers.

*Bel.* Their merit I may have some doubt of; their interest I can readily give credit to: there is little promotion to be looked for in your profession, I believe, without friends, captain?

*Dud.* I believe so, too: have you any other business with me, may I ask?

*Bel.* Your patience for a moment. I was informed you was about to join your regiment in distant quarters abroad?

*Dud.* I have been soliciting an exchange to a company on full-pay, quartered at James's Fort, in Senegambia; but, I'm afraid, I must drop the undertaking.

*Bel.* Why so, pray?

*Dud.* Why so, sir? 'Tis a home question for a perfect stranger to put; there is something very particular in all this.

*Bel.* If it is not impertinent, sir, allow me to ask you what reason you have for despairing of success.

*Dud.* Why really, sir, mine is an obvious reason for a soldier to have———Want of money; simply that.

*Bel.* May I beg to know the sum you have occasion for?

*Dud.* Truly, sir, I cannot exactly tell you on a sudden; nor is it, I suppose, of any great consequence to you to be informed; but I should guess, in the gross, that two hundred pounds would serve.

*Bel.* And do you find a difficulty in raising that sum upon your pay? 'Tis done every day.

*Dud.* The nature of the climate makes it difficult; I can get no one to insure my life.

*Bel.* Oh! that's a circumstance may make for you, as well as against: in short, captain Dudley, it so happens, that I can command the sum of two hundred pounds: seek, therefore, no farther; I'll accommodate you with it upon easy terms.

*Dud.* Sir! do I understand you rightly?——I beg your pardon; but am I to believe that you are in earnest?

*Bel.* What is your surprise? Is it an uncommon thing for a gentleman to speak truth? Or is it incredible that one fellow-creature should assist another!

*Dud.* I ask your pardon———May I beg to know to whom———Do you propose this in the way of business?

*Bel.* Entirely: I have no other business on earth.

*Dud.* Indeed!——You are not a broker, I'm persuaded?

*Bel.* I am not.

*Dud.* Nor an army agent, I think?

*Bel.* I hope you will not think the worse of me for being neither; in short, sir, if you will peruse this paper, it will explain to you who I am, and upon what terms I act. While you read it, I will step home, and fetch the money, and we will conclude the bargain without loss of time. In the mean while, good day to you. [*Exit hastily.*

*Dud.* Humph! there's something very odd in all this——let me see what we've got here——This paper is to tell me who he is, and what are his terms: in the name of wonder, why has he sealed it?——Hey-day! what's here? two bank-notes of a hundred each! I can't comprehend what this means. Hold; here's a writing; perhaps that will shew me. 'Accept this trifle; 'pursue your fortune, and prosper.' Am I in a dream? Is this a reality?

*Enter* MAJOR O'FLAHERTY.

*O'Fla.* Save you, my dear! Is it you now that are captain Dudley, I would ask? Whuh!—what's the hurry the man's in? If 'tis the lad that ran out of the shop you would overtake, you might as well stay where you are; by my soul, he's as nimble as a Croat; you are a full hour's march in the rear—Ay, faith, you may as well turn back, and give over the pursuit. Well, captain Dudley, if that's your name, there's a letter for you. Read, man; read it; and I'll have a word with you after you have done.

*Dud.* More miracles on foot! So, so, from lady Rusport.

*O'Fla.* You're right; it's from her ladyship.

*Dud.* Well, sir, I have cast my eye over it; 'tis short and peremptory; are you acquainted with the contents?

*O'Fla.* Not at all, my dear; not at all.

*Dud.* Have you any message from lady Rusport?

*O'Fla.* Not a syllable, honey; only, when you've digested the letter, I've a little bit of a message to deliver you from myself.

*Dud.* And may I beg to know who yourself is?

*O'Fla.* Dennis O'Flaherty, at your service; a poor major of grenadiers; nothing better.

*Dud.* So much for your name and title, sir; now, be so good to favour me with your message.

*O'Fla.* Why, then, captain, I must tell you, I have promised lady Rusport you shall do whatever it is she bids you to do in that letter there.

*Dud.* Ay, indeed? have you undertaken so much, major, without knowing either what she commands, or what I can perform?

*O'Fla.* That's your concern, my dear, not mine; I must keep my word, you know.

*Dud.* Or else, I suppose, you and I must measure swords?

*O'Fla.* Upon my soul, you've hit it!

*Dud.* That would hardly answer to either of us: you and I have, probably, had enough of fighting in our time before now.

*O'Fla.* Faith and troth, master Dudley, you may say that: 'tis thirty years, come the time, that I have followed the trade, and in a pretty many countries. Let me see—In the war before last I served in the Irish brigade, d'ye see; there, after bringing off the French monarch, I left his service, with a British bullet in my body, and this ribbon in my button-hole. Last war I followed the fortunes of the German eagle, in the corps of grenadiers; there I had my belly full of fighting, and a plentiful scarcity of every thing else. After six-and-twenty engagements, great and small, I went off, with this gash on my scull, and a kiss of the empress queen's sweet hand, (Heaven bless it!) for my pains. Since the peace, my dear, I took a little turn with the confederates there in Poland—but such another set of madcaps! by the lord Harry, I never knew what it was they were scuffling about!

*Dud.* Well, major, I won't add another action to the list—you shall keep your promise with lady Rusport; she requires me to leave London; I shall go in a few days, and you may take what credit you please from my compliance.

*O'Fla.* Give me your hand, my dear boy!

This will make her my own: when that's the case, we shall be brothers, you know, and we'll share her fortune between us.

*Dud.* Not so, major: the man who marries lady Rusport will have a fair title to her whole fortune without division. But, I hope, your expectations of prevailing are founded upon good reasons?

*O'Fla.* Upon the best grounds in the world.—First, I think she will comply, because she is a woman: secondly, I am persuaded she won't hold out long, because she's a widow: and thirdly, I make sure of her, because I've married five wives (*en militaire* captain), and never failed yet; and, for what I know, they're all alive and merry at this very hour.

*Dud.* Well, sir, go on and prosper: if you can inspire lady Rusport with half your charity, I shall think you deserve all her fortune: at present, I must beg your excuse: good morning to you. [*Exit.*

*O'Fla.* A good sensible man, and very much of a soldier! I did not care if I was better acquainted with him: but 'tis an awkward kind of country for that; the English, I observe, are close friends, but distant acquaintance. I suspect the old lady has not been over generous to poor Dudley; I shall give her a little touch about that: upon my soul, I know but one excuse a person can have for giving nothing——and that is, like myself, having nothing to give.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.—*Changes to* LADY RUSPORT'S *house. A dressing room.*

*Enter* MISS RUSPORT *and* LUCY.

*Char.* Well, Lucy, you've dislodged the old lady at last; but methought you was a tedious time about it.

*Lucy.* A tedious time, indeed; I think they, who have least to spare, contrive to throw the most away. I thought I should never have got her out of the house.

*Char.* Why, she's as deliberate in canvassing every article of her dress, as an ambassador would be in settling the preliminaries of a treaty.

*Lucy.* There was a new hood and handkerchief, that had come express from Holborn-hill on the occasion, that took as much time in adjusting——

*Char.* As they did in making, and she was as vain of them as an old maid of a young lover.

*Lucy.* Or a young lover of himself. Then, madam, this being a visit of great ceremony to a person of distinction, at the west end of the town, the old chariot was dragged forth on the occasion, with strict charges to dress out the box with the leopard-skin hammer-cloth.

*Char.* Yes, and to hang the false tails on the miserable stumps of the old crawling cattle.——Well, well, pray Heaven the crazy affair don't break down again with her—at least, till she gets to her journey's end! But where's Charles Dudley? Run down, dear girl, and be ready to let him in; I think he's as long in coming as she was in going.

*Lucy.* Why, indeed, madam, you seem the more alert of the two, I must say. [*Exit.*

*Char.* Now, the deuce take the girl for putting that notion into my head! I'm sadly afraid Dudley does not like me: so much encouragement as I have given him to declare himself, I never could get a word from him on the subject. This may be very honourable, but upon my life it's very provoking. By the way, I wonder how I look to-day: Oh, shockingly! hideously pale! like a witch! This is the old lady's glass; and she has left some of her wrinkles on it. How frightfully have I put on my cap! all awry! and my hair dressed so unbecomingly! altogether, I am a most complete fright.

CHARLES DUDLEY *comes in, unobserved.*

*Cha.* That I deny.

*Char.* Ah!

*Cha.* Quarrelling with your glass, cousin?—Make it up; make it up, and be friends: it cannot compliment you more, than by reflecting you as you are.

*Char.* Well, I vow, my dear Charles, that is delightfully said, and deserves my very best curtsey: your flattery, like a rich jewel, has a value not only from its superior lustre, but from its extraordinary scarceness: I verily think this is the only civil speech you ever directed to my person in your life.

*Cha.* And I ought to ask pardon of your good sense for having done it now.

*Char.* Nay, now you relapse again: don't you know, if you keep well with a woman on the great score of beauty, she'll never quarrel with you on the trifling article of good sense? But any thing serves to fill up a dull yawning hour with an insipid cousin; you have brighter moments, and warmer spirits, for the dear girl of your heart.

*Cha.* Oh, fie upon you! fie upon you!

*Char.* You blush, and the reason is apparent: you are a novice in hypocrisy; but no practice can make a visit of ceremony pass for a visit of choice. Love is ever before its time; friendship is apt to lag a little after it: pray, Charles, did you make any extraordinary haste hither?

*Cha.* By your question, I see you acquit me of the impertinence of being in love.

*Char.* But why impertinence? Why the impertinence of being in love? You have one language for me, Charles, and another for the woman of your affection.

*Cha.* You are mistaken; the woman of my affection shall never hear any other language from me, than what I use to you.

*Char.* I am afraid, then, you'll never make yourself understood by her.

*Cha.* It is not fit I should; there is no need of love to make me miserable; 'tis wretchedness enough to be a beggar.

*Char.* A beggar, do you call yourself? O Charles, Charles! rich in every merit and accomplishment, whom may you not aspire to? And why think you so unworthily of our sex, as to conclude there is not one to be found with sense to discern your virtue, and generosity to reward it?

*Cha.* You distress me; I must beg to hear no more.

*Char.* Well, I can be silent. Thus does he always serve me, whenever I am about to disclose myself to him. [*Aside.*

*Cha.* Why do you not banish me and my misfortunes for ever from your thoughts?

*Char.* Ay, wherefore do I not, since you never allowed me a place in yours? But go, sir; I have no right to stay you; go where your heart directs you; go to the happy, the distinguished fair one.

*Cha.* Now, by all that's good, you do me wrong: there is no such fair one for me to go to; nor have I an acquaintance among the sex, yourself excepted, which answers to that description.

*Char.* Indeed!

*Cha.* In very truth: there, then, let us drop the subject. May you be happy, though I never can.

*Char.* O, Charles! give me your hand: if I have offended you, I ask your pardon: you have been long acquainted with my temper, and know how to bear with its infirmities.

*Cha.* Thus, my dear Charlotte, let us seal our reconciliation. [*Kissing her hand.*] Bear with thy infirmities! By Heaven, I know not any one failing in thy whole composition, except that of too great a partiality for an undeserving man.

*Char.* And you are now taking the very course to augment that failing. A thought strikes me: I have a commission that you must absolutely execute for me; I have immediate occasion for the sum of two hundred pounds: you know my fortune is shut up till I am of age; take this paltry box (it contains my ear-rings, and some other baubles I have no use for), carry it to our opposite neighbour, Mr Stockwell (I don't know where else to apply), leave it as a deposit in his hands, and beg him to accommodate me with that sum.

*Cha.* Dear Charlotte, what are you about to do? How can you possibly want two hundred pounds?

*Char.* How can I possibly do without it, you mean? Doesn't every lady want two hundred pounds? Perhaps, I have lost it at play; perhaps, I mean to win as much to it; perhaps, I want it for two hundred different uses.

*Cha.* Pooh! pooh! all this is nothing; don't I know you never play?

*Char.* You mistake; I have a spirit to set not only this trifle, but my whole fortune, upon a stake; therefore, make no wry faces, but do as I bid you: you will find Mr Stockwell a very honourable gentleman.

*Enter* LUCY *in haste.*

*Lucy.* Dear madam, as I live, here comes the old lady in a hackney-coach.

*Char.* The old chariot has given her a second tumble: away with you! you know your way out without meeting her: take the box, and do as I desire you.

*Cha.* I must not dispute your orders. Farewell!

[*Exeunt* CHARLES *and* CHARLOTTE.

## SCENE V.

*Enter* LADY RUSPORT, *leaning on* MAJOR O'FLAHERTY'S *arm.*

*O'Fla.* Rest yourself upon my arm; never spare it; 'tis strong enough: it has stood harder service than you can put it to.

*Lucy.* Mercy upon me, what is the matter! I am frightened out of my wits: has your ladyship had an accident?

*Lady Rus.* O, Lucy! the most untoward one in nature! I know not how I shall repair it.

*O'Fla.* Never go about to repair it, my lady; even build a new one; 'twas but a crazy piece of business at best.

*Lucy.* Bless me! is the old chariot broke down with you again?

*Lady Rus.* Broke, child? I don't know what might have been broke, if, by great good fortune, this obliging gentleman had not been at hand to assist me.

*Lucy.* Dear madam, let me run and fetch you a cup of the cordial drops.

*Lady Rus.* Do, Lucy. Alas, sir! ever since I lost my husband, my poor nerves have been shook to pieces: there hangs his beloved picture: that precious relic, and a plentiful jointure, is all that remains to console me for the best of men.

*O'Fla.* Let me see: i'faith a comely personage! by his fur cloak, I suppose he was in the Russian service; and, by the gold chain round his neck, I should guess he had been honoured with the order of St Catharine.

*Lady Rus.* No, no; he meddled with no St Catharines: that's the habit he wore in his mayoralty; sir Stephen was lord-mayor of London: but he is gone, and has left me a poor, weak, solitary widow behind him.

*O'Fla.* By all means, then, take a strong, able, hearty man to repair his loss. If such a plain fellow as one Dennis O'Flaherty can please you, I think I may venture to say, without any dis-

paragement to the gentleman in the fur-gown there——

*Lady Rus.* What are you going to say? Don't shock my ears with any comparisons, I desire.

*O'Fla.* Not I, by my soul! I don't believe there's any comparison in the case.

*Lady Rus.* Oh, are you come? Give me the drops; I'm all in a flutter!

*O'Fla.* Hark'e, sweetheart, what are those same drops? have you any more left in the bottle? I didn't care if I took a little sip of them myself.

*Lucy.* Oh, sir, they are called the cordial restorative elixir, or the nervous golden drops;—they are only for ladies' cases.

*O'Fla.* Yes, yes, my dear, there are gentlemen as well as ladies that stand in need of those same golden drops: they'd suit my case to a tittle. [*Drinks.*

*Lady Rus.* Well, major, did you give old Dudley my letter? and will the silly man do as I bid him, and be gone?

*O'Fla.* You are obeyed; he's on his march.

*Lady Rus.* That's well; you have managed this matter to perfection. I did'nt think he would have been so easily prevailed upon.

*O'Fla.* At the first word; no difficulty in life; 'twas the very thing he was determined to do, before I came: I never met a more obliging gentleman.

*Lady Rus.* Well, 'tis no matter; so I am but rid of him, and his distresses: would you believe it, major O'Flaherty, it was but this morning he sent a-begging to me for money to fit him out upon some wild-goose expedition to the coast of Africa, I know not where?

*O'Fla.* Well, you sent him what he wanted?

*Lady Rus.* I sent him what he deserved, a flat refusal.

*O'Fla.* You refused him?

*Lady Rus.* Most undoubtedly.

*O'Fla.* You sent him nothing?

*Lady Rus.* Not a shilling.

*O'Fla.* Good morning to you—Your servant— [*Going.*

*Lady Rus.* Hey-day! what ails the man? where are you going?

*O'Fla.* Out of your house, before the roof falls on my head—to poor Dudley, to share the little modicum that thirty years hard service has left me. I wish it was more for his sake.

*Lady Rus.* Very well, sir; take your course; I shan't attempt to stop you: I shall survive it; it will not break my heart, if I never see you more.

*O'Fla.* Break your heart! No, o' my conscience will it not. You preach, and you pray, and you turn up your eyes, and all the while you're as hard-hearted as an hyena! An hyena, truly! By my soul, there isn't, in the whole creation, so savage an animal as a human creature without pity! [*Exit.*

*Lady Rus.* A hyena, truly! Where did the fellow blunder upon that word? Now the deuce take him for using it, and the Macaronies for inventing it! [*Exit.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.—*A room in* STOCKWELL'S *house.*

*Enter* STOCKWELL *and* BELCOUR.

*Stock.* GRATIFY me so far, however, Mr Belcour, as to see Miss Rusport; carry her the sum she wants, and return the poor girl her box of diamonds, which Dudley left in my hands; you know what to say on the occasion better than I do: that part of your commission I leave to your own discretion, and you may season it with what gallantry you think fit.

*Bel.* You could not have pitched upon a greater bungler at gallantry than myself, if you had rummaged every company in the city, and the whole court of aldermen into the bargain. Part of your errand, however, I will do; but whether it shall be with an ill grace or a good one, depends upon the caprice of a moment, the humour of the lady, the mode of our meeting, and a thousand undefinable small circumstances, that nevertheless determine us upon all the great occasions of life.

*Stock.* I persuade myself you will find Miss Rusport an ingenious, worthy, animated girl.

*Bel.* Why, I like her the better, as a woman; but name her not to me as a wife! No, if ever I marry, it must be a staid, sober, considerate damsel, with blood in her veins as cold as a turtle's; quick of scent as a vulture, when danger's in the wind; wary and sharp-sighted as a hawk, when treachery is on foot: with such a companion at my elbow, for ever whispering in my ear—have a care of this man, he's a cheat! don't go near that woman, she's a jilt! over head there's a scaffold! under foot there's a well! Oh! sir, such a woman might lead me up and down this great city without difficulty or danger; but, with a girl of Miss Rusport's complexion! heaven and earth, sir! we should be duped, undone, and distracted, in a fortnight.

*Stock.* Ha, ha, ha! Why, you are become wondrous circumspect of a sudden, pupil; and if you can find such a prudent damsel as you describe, you have my consent——only beware how you chuse! Discretion is not the reigning quality amongst the fine ladies of the present time; and I think, in Miss Rusport's particular, I have given you no bad counsel.

*Bel.* Well, well, if you'll fetch me the jewels, I believe I can undertake to carry them to her; but as for the money, I'll have nothing to do with

that; Dudley would be your fittest ambassador on that occasion, and, if I mistake not, the most agreeable to the lady.

*Stock.* Why, indeed, from what I know of the matter, it may not improbably be destined to find its way into his pockets. [*Exit.*

*Bel.* Then, depend upon it, these are not the only trinkets she means to dedicate to captain Dudley. As for me, Stockwell indeed wants me to marry; but till I can get this bewitching girl, this incognita, out of my head, I can never think of any other woman.

*Enter Servant, and delivers a letter.*

Hey-day! Where can I have picked up a correspondent already! 'Tis a most execrable manuscript—Let me see—Martha Fulmer—Who is Martha Fulmer? Pshaw! I won't be at the trouble of decyphering her damned pot-hooks. Hold, hold, hold! what have we got here?

'Dear sir,

'I've discovered the lady you was so much 'smitten with, and can procure you an interview 'with her. If you can be as generous to a pretty 'girl, as you was to a paltry old captain,'—how did she find that out!—'you need not despair. 'Come to me immediately; the lady is now in my 'house, and expects you.

'Yours,

'MARTHA FULMER.'

O thou dear, lovely, and enchanting paper, which I was about to tear into a thousand scraps, devoutly I entreat thy pardon! I have slighted thy contents, which are delicious; slandered thy characters, which are divine; and all the atonement I can make, is implicitly to obey thy mandates.

STOCKWELL *returns.*

*Stock.* Mr Belcour, here are the jewels; this letter incloses bills for the money; and, if you will deliver it to Miss Rusport, you'll have no farther trouble on that score.

*Bel.* Ah, sir! the letter which I have been reading disqualifies me for delivering the letter which you have been writing: I have other game on foot; the loveliest girl my eyes ever feasted upon, is started in view, and the world cannot now divert me from pursuing her.

*Stock.* Hey-day! what has turned you thus on a sudden?

*Bel.* A woman: one that can turn, and overturn me and my tottering resolutions every way she will. Oh, sir, if this is folly in me, you must rail at nature: you must chide the sun, that was vertical at my birth, and would not wink upon my nakedness, but swaddled me in the broadest, hottest glare of his meridian beams.

*Stock.* Mere rhapsody! mere childish rhapsody! the libertine's familiar plea——Nature made us, 'tis true; but we are the responsible creators of our own faults and follies.

*Bel.* Sir!

*Stock.* Slave of every face you meet, some hussy has inveigled you, some handsome profligate (the town is full of them); and, when once fairly bankrupt in constitution, as well as fortune, nature no longer serves as your excuse for being vicious, necessity, perhaps, will stand your friend, and you'll reform.

*Bel.* You are severe.

*Stock.* It fits me to be so—it well becomes a father——I would say a friend——How strangely I forget myself—How difficult it is to counterfeit indifference, and put a mask upon the heart! ——I've struck him hard; he reddens!

*Bel.* How could you tempt me so? Had you not inadvertently dropped the name of father, I fear our friendship, short as it has been, would scarce have held me——But even your mistake I reverence——Give me your hand—'tis over.

*Stock.* Generous young man!—let me embrace you—How shall I hide my tears? I have been to blame; because I bore you the affection of a father, I rashly took up the authority of one. I ask your pardon——pursue your course; I have no right to stop it——What would you have me do with these things?

*Bel.* This, if I might advise; carry the money to Miss Rusport immediately: never let generosity wait for its materials; that part of the business presses. Give me the jewels; I'll find an opportunity of delivering them into her hands; and your visit may pave the way for my reception. [*Exit.*

*Stock.* Be it so: good morning to you. Farewell advice! Away goes he upon the wing for pleasure! What various passions he awakens in me! He pains, yet pleases me; affrights, offends, yet grows upon my heart. His very failings set him off—for ever trespassing, for ever atoning, I almost think he would not be so perfect, were he free from fault: I must dissemble longer; and yet how painful the experiment!——Even now he's gone upon some wild adventure; and who can tell what mischief may befal him? O nature, what it is to be a father! Just such a thoughtless headlong thing was I, when I beguiled his mother into love. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* FULMER'S *house.*

*Enter* FULMER *and his wife.*

*Ful.* I tell you, Patty, you are a fool to think of bringing him and Miss Dudley together; 'twill ruin every thing, and blow your whole scheme up to the moon at once.

*Mrs Ful.* Why, sure, Mr Fulmer, I may be allowed to rear a chicken of my own hatching, as they say! Who first sprung the thought but I, pray? Who first contrived the plot? Who proposed the letter, but I, I?

*Ful.* And who dogged the gentleman home? Who found out his name, fortune, connexions; that he was a West Indian, fresh landed, and full of cash; a gull to our heart's content; a hot-brained, head-long spark, that would run into our trap, like a wheat-ear under a turf?

*Mrs Ful.* Hark! he's come! disappear, march, and leave the field open to my machinations.

[*Exit* FULMER.

*Enter* BELCOUR.

*Bel.* O, thou dear minister to my happiness, let me embrace thee! Why, thou art my polar star, my propitious constellation, by which I navigate my impatient bark into the port of pleasure and delight!

*Mrs Ful.* Oh, you men are sly creatures! Do you remember now, you cruel, what you said to me this morning?

*Bel.* All a jest, a frolic; never think on't; bury it for ever in oblivion. Thou! why, thou art all over nectar and ambrosia, powder of pearl and odour of roses; thou hast the youth of Hebe, the beauty of Venus, and the pen of Sappho! But, in the name of all that's lovely, where's the lady? I expected to find her with you.

*Mrs Ful.* No doubt you did; and these raptures were designed for her; but where have you loitered? the lady's gone; you are too late. Girls of her sort are not to be kept waiting, like negro slaves in your sugar plantations.

*Bel.* Gone! whither is she gone? tell me, that I may follow her.

*Mrs Ful.* Hold, hold! not so fast, young gentleman; this is a case of some delicacy; should captain Dudley know that I introduced you to his daughter, he is a man of such scrupulous honour——

*Bel.* What do you tell me! is she daughter to the old gentleman I met here this morning?

*Mrs Ful.* The same; him you was so generous to.

*Bel.* There's an end of the matter, then, at once; it shall never be said of me, that I took advantage of the father's necessities to trepan the daughter. [*Going.*

*Mrs Ful.* So, so, I've made a wrong cast; he's one of your conscientious sinners, I find; but I won't lose him thus——Ha, ha, ha!

*Bel.* What is it you laugh at?

*Mrs Ful.* Your absolute inexperience: have you lived so very little time in this country, as not to know, that, between young people of equal ages, the term of sister often is a cover for that of mistress? This young lady is, in that sense of the word, sister to young Dudley, and consequently daughter to my old lodger.

*Bel.* Indeed! are you serious?

*Mrs Ful.* Can you doubt it! I must have been pretty well assured of that before I invited you hither.

*Bel.* That's true: she cannot be a woman of honour; and Dudley is an unconscionable young rogue to think of keeping one fine girl in pay, by raising contributions on another: he shall therefore give her up; she is a dear, bewitching, mischievous, little devil; and he shall positively give her up.

*Mrs Ful.* Ay, now the freak has taken you again! I say, give her up!—there's one way, indeed, and certain of success.

*Bel.* What's that?

*Mrs Ful.* Out-bid him; never dream of out-blustering him; buy out his lease of possession, and leave her to manage his ejectment.

*Bel.* Is she so venal? Never fear me then: when beauty is the purchase, I shan't think much of the price.

*Mrs Ful.* All things, then, will be made easy enough: let me see; some little genteel present to begin with: what have you got about you? Ay, search; I can bestow it to advantage; there's no time to be lost.

*Bel.* Hang it! confound it; a plague upon't, say I! I hav'n't a guinea left in my pocket; I parted from my whole stock here this morning, and have forgot to supply myself since.

*Mrs Ful.* Mighty well! let it pass; there's an end; think no more of the lady, that's all.

*Bel.* Distraction! think no more of her? Let me only step home, and provide myself, I'll be back with you in an instant.

*Mrs Ful.* Pooh, pooh! that's a wretched shift: have you nothing of value about you? Money's a coarse, slovenly vehicle, fit only to bribe electors in a borough; there are more graceful ways of purchasing a lady's favours; rings, trinkets, jewels!

*Bel.* Jewels! Gadso, I protest I had forgot! I have a case of jewels—but they won't do, I must not part from them: no, no; they are appropriated; they are none of my own.

*Mrs Ful.* Let me see, let me see! Ay, now, this were something-like:——pretty creatures, how they sparkle! these would ensure success.

*Bel.* Indeed!

*Mrs Ful.* These would make her your own for ever.

*Bel.* Then, the deuce take them for belonging to another person! I could find in my heart to give them the girl, and swear I've lost them.

*Mrs Ful.* Ay, do; say they were stolen out of your pocket.

*Bel.* No, hang it, that's dishonourable: here, give me the paltry things; I'll give you an order on my merchant for double their value.

*Mrs Ful.* An order! No; order me no orders upon merchants, with their value received, and three days grace; their noting, protesting, and indorsing, and all their counting-house formalities; I'll have nothing to do with them: leave your diamonds with me, and give your order for the value of them to the owner: the mo-

ney would be as good as the trinkets, I warrant you.

*Bel.* Hey! how! I never thought of that: but a breach of trust—'tis impossible; I never can consent; therefore, give me the jewels back again.

*Mrs Ful.* Take them: I am now to tell you the lady is in this house.

*Bel.* In this house!

*Mrs Ful.* Yes, sir, in this very house—but what of that? You have got what you like better—your toys, your trinkets. Go, go! oh! you're a man of a notable spirit, are you not?

*Bel.* Provoking creature! bring me to the sight of the dear creature, and dispose of me as you think fit.

*Mrs Ful.* And of the diamonds, too?

*Bel.* Damn them! I would there was not such a bauble in nature! But come, come, dispatch: if I had the throne of Delhi, I should give it to her.

*Mrs Ful.* Swear to me, then, that you will keep within bounds—remember, she passes for the sister of young Dudley. Oh! if you come to your flights and your rhapsodies, she'll be off in an instant.

*Bel.* Never fear me.

*Mrs Ful.* You must expect to hear her talk of her father, as she calls him, and her brother, and your bounty to her family.

*Bel.* Ay, ay; never mind what she talks of, only bring her.

*Mrs Ful.* You'll be prepared upon that head?

*Bel.* I shall be prepared, never fear: away with you!

*Mrs Ful.* But hold! I had forgot: not a word of the diamonds—leave that matter to my management.

*Bel.* Hell and vexation! Get out of the room, or I shall run distracted. [*Exit* MRS FULMER.] Of a certain, Belcour, thou art born to be the fool of woman: sure no man sins with so much repentance, or repents with so little amendment, as I do. I cannot give away another person's property—honour forbids me: and I positively cannot give up the girl—love, passion, constitution—every thing protests against that. How shall I decide? I cannot bring myself to break a trust; and I am not at present in the humour to baulk my inclination. Is there no middle way? Let me consider——There is, there is: my good genius has presented me with one—apt, obvious, honourable: the girl shall not go without her baubles—I'll not go without the girl—Miss Rusport sha'n't lose her diamonds—I'll save Dudley from destruction—and every party shall be a gainer by the project.

*Enter* MRS FULMER, *introducing* MISS DUDLEY.

*Mrs Ful.* Miss Dudley, this is the worthy gentleman you wish to see; this is Mr Belcour.

*Lou.* As I live, the very man that beset me in the streets! [*Aside.*

*Bel.* An angel, by this light! Oh, I am gone past all retrieving! [*Aside.*

*Lou.* Mrs Fulmer, sir, informs me you are the gentleman from whom my father has received such civilities.

*Bel.* Oh! never name them.

*Lou.* Pardon me, Mr Belcour; they must be both named and remembered; and if my father was here——

*Bel.* I am much better pleased with his representative.

*Lou.* That title is my brother's, sir; I have no claim to it.

*Bel.* I believe it.

*Lou.* But as neither he nor my father were fortunate enough to be at home, I could not resist the opportunity——

*Bel.* Nor I neither, by my soul, madam! let us improve it, therefore. I am in love with you to distraction—I was charmed at the first glance—I attempted to accost you—you fled—I followed—but was defeated of an interview: at length I have obtained one, and seize the opportunity of casting my person and fortune at your feet.

*Lou.* You astonish me! Are you in your senses? or do you make a jest of my misfortunes? Do you ground pretences on your generosity, or do you make a practice of this folly with every woman you meet?

*Bel.* Upon my life, no: as you are the handsomest woman I ever met, so you are the first to whom I ever made the like professions: as for my generosity, madam, I must refer you, on that score, to this good lady, who, I believe, has something to offer in my behalf.

*Lou.* Don't build upon that, sir; I must have better proofs of your generosity, than the mere divestment of a little superfluous dross, before I can credit the sincerity of a profession so abruptly delivered. [*Exit hastily.*

*Bel.* O ye gods and goddesses! how her anger animates her beauty! [*Going out.*

*Mrs Ful.* Stay, sir; if you stir a step after her, I renounce your interest for ever: why, you'll ruin every thing!

*Bel.* Well, I must have her, cost what it will: I see she understands her own value, though; a little superfluous dross, truly! She must have better proofs of my generosity!

*Mrs Ful.* 'Tis exactly as I told you—your money she calls dross—she's too proud to stain her fingers with your coin: bate your hook well with jewels—try that experiment, and she's your own.

*Bel.* Take them—let them go—lay them at her feet—I must get out of the scrape as I can—my propensity is irresistible—there—you have them—they are yours—they are hers—but remember they are a trust—I commit them to her

keeping till I can buy them off with something she shall think more valuable; now, tell me when shall I meet her?

*Mrs Ful.* How can I tell that! Don't you see what an alarm you've put her into? Oh, you're a rare one! But go your ways for this while; leave her to my management, and come to me at seven this evening; but remember not to bring empty pockets with you—Ha, ha, ha!

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE III.—LADY RUSPORT'S *house.*

*Enter* MISS RUSPORT, *followed by a servant.*

*Char.* Desire Mr Stockwell to walk in.

[*Exit servant.*

*Enter* STOCKWELL.

*Stock.* Madam, your most obedient servant: I am honoured with your commands, by captain Dudley, and have brought the money with me as you directed—I understand the sum you have occasion for is two hundred pounds.

*Char.* It is, sir—I am quite confounded at your taking this trouble upon yourself, Mr Stockwell.

*Stock.* There is a bank-note, madam, to the amount: your jewels are in safe hands, and will be delivered to you directly. If I had been happy in being better known to you, I should have hoped you would not have thought it necessary to place a deposit in my hands for so trifling a sum as you have now required me to supply you with.

*Char.* The baubles I sent you may very well be spared; and, as they are the only security in my present situation I can give you, I could wish you would retain them in your hands: when I am of age (which, if I live a few months, I shall be), I will replace your favour with thanks.

*Stock.* It is obvious, Miss Rusport, that your charms will suffer no impeachment by the absence of those superficial ornaments; but they should be seen in the suite of a woman of fashion, not as creditors, to whom you are indebted for your appearance, but as subservient attendants, which help to make up your equipage.

*Char.* Mr Stockwell is determined not to wrong the confidence I reposed in his politeness.

*Stock.* I have only to request, madam, that you will allow Mr Belcour, a young gentleman in whose happiness I particularly interest myself, to have the honour of delivering you the box of jewels.

*Char.* Most gladly; any friend of yours cannot fail of being welcome here.

*Stock.* I flatter myself you will not find him totally undeserving your good opinion—an education, not of the strictest kind, and strong animal spirits, are apt, sometimes, to betray him into youthful irregularities: but an high principle of honour, and an uncommon benevolence, in the eye of candour will, I hope, atone for any faults, by which these good qualities are not impaired.

*Char.* I dare say Mr Belcour's behaviour wants no apology—we've no right to be over strict in canvassing the morals of a common acquaintance.

*Stock.* I wish it may be my happiness to see Mr Belcour in the list, not of your common, but particular acquaintance—of your friends, Miss Rusport—I dare not be more explicit.

*Char.* Nor need you, Mr Stockwell: I shall be studious to deserve his friendship; and, though I have long since unalterably placed my affection on another, I trust, I have not left myself insensible to the merits of Mr Belcour; and hope that neither he nor you will, for that reason, think me less worthy of your good opinion and regards.

*Stock.* Miss Rusport, I sincerely wish you happy: I have no doubt you have placed your affection on a deserving man; and I have no right to combat your choice. [*Exit.*

*Char.* How honourable is that behaviour! Now, if Charles were here, I should be happy. The old lady is so fond of her new Irish acquaintance, that I have the whole house at my disposal.

[*Exit.*

SCENE IV.

*Enter* BELCOUR, *preceded by a Servant.*

*Ser.* I ask your honour's pardon; I thought my young lady was here: who shall I inform her would speak to her?

*Bel.* Belcour is my name, sir; and pray beg your lady to put herself in no hurry on my account; for I'd sooner see the devil than see her face.—[*Exit Servant.*]—In the name of all that's mischievous, why did Stockwell drive me hither in such haste? A pretty figure, truly, I shall make! an ambassador without credentials. Blockhead that I was, to charge myself with her diamonds——officious, meddling puppy! Now they are irretrievably gone: that suspicious jade Fulmer wou'dn't part even with a sight of them, though I would have ransomed them at twice their value.—Now must I trust to my poor wits to bring me off: a lamentable dependance! Fortune be my helper:——Here comes the girl.—— If she is noble-minded, as she is said to be, she will forgive me——if not, 'tis a lost cause; for I have not thought of one word in my excuse.

*Enter* CHARLOTTE.

*Char.* Mr Belcour, I'm proud to see you: your friend, Mr Stockwell, prepared me to expect this honour; and I am happy in the opportunity of being known to you.

*Bel.* A fine girl, by my soul! Now what a cursed hang-dog do I look like! [*Aside.*

*Char.* You are newly arrived in this country, sir?

*Bel.* Just landed, madam, just set a-shore,

with a large cargo of Muscavado sugars, rum-puncheons, mahogany slabs, wet sweetmeats, and green paroquets.

*Char.* May I ask you how you like London, sir?

*Bel.* To admiration: I think the town and the town's-folk are exactly suited; 'tis a great, rich, overgrown, noisy, tumultuous place: the whole morning is a bustle to get money, and the whole afternoon is a hurry to spend it.

*Char.* Are these all the observations you have made?

*Bel.* No, madam; I have observed the women are very captivating, and the men very soon caught.

*Char.* Ay, indeed! Whence do you draw that conclusion?

*Bel.* From infallible guides; the first remark I collect from what I now see, the second from I now feel.

*Char.* Oh, the deuce take you! But, to wave this subject—I believe, sir, this was a visit of business, not compliment: was it not?

*Bel.* Ay—now comes on my execution.

*Char.* You have some foolish trinkets of mine, Mr Belcour; hav'n't you?

*Bel.* No, in truth, they are gone in search of a trinket, still more foolish than themselves.

[*Aside.*

*Char.* Some diamonds, I mean, sir. Mr Stockwell informed me you was charged with them.

*Bel.* Oh, yes, madam—but I have the most treacherous memory in life—here they are: pray put them up; they're all right; you need not examine them. [*Gives a box.*

*Char.* Hey-day—right, sir! Why these are not my diamonds; these are quite different; and, as it should seem, of much greater value.

*Bel.* Upon my life, I'm glad on't! for then, I hope, you value them more than your own.

*Char.* As a purchaser I should, but not as an owner: you mistake; these belong to somebody else.

*Bel.* 'Tis yours, I'm afraid, that belong to somebody else.

*Char.* What is it you mean? I must insist upon your taking them back again.

*Bel.* Pray, madam, don't do that; I shall infallibly lose them: I have the worst luck with diamonds of any man living.

*Char.* That you might well say, was you to give me these in the place of mine. But pray, sir, what is the reason of all this? Why have you changed the jewels, and where have you disposed of mine?

*Bel.* Miss Rusport, I cannot invent a lie for my life; and, if it was to save it, I cou'dn't tell one: I am an idle, dissipated, unthinking fellow, not worth your notice: in short, I am a West Indian; and you must try me according to the charter of my colony, not by a jury of English spinsters. The truth is, I've given away your jewels; caught with a pair of sparkling eyes, whose lustre blinded theirs; I served your property as I should my own, and lavished it away. Let me not totally despair of your forgiveness! I frequently do wrong, but never with impunity: if your displeasure is added to my own, my punishment will be too severe. When I parted from the jewels, I had not the honour of knowing their owner.

*Char.* Mr Belcour, your sincerity charms me! I enter at once into your character, and I make all the allowances for it you can desire. I take your jewels for the present, because I know there is no other way of reconciling you to yourself; but, if I give way to your spirit in one point, you must yield to mine in another: remember, I will not keep more than the value of my own jewels: there is no need to be pillaged by more than one woman at a time, sir.

*Bel.* Now, may every blessing that can crown your virtues, and reward your beauty, be showered upon you! May you meet admiration without envy, love without jealousy, and old age without malady! May the man of your heart be ever constant, and may you never meet a less penitent or less grateful offender than myself!

*Enter Servant, who delivers a letter.*

*Char.* Does your letter require such haste?

*Ser.* I was bade to give it into your own hands, madam.

*Char.* From Charles Dudley, I see——Have I your permission? Good Heaven, what do I read? Mr Belcour, you are concerned in this—'Dear 'Charlotte, in the midst of our distress, Provi-'dence has cast a benefactor in our way, after 'the most unexpected manner: a young West 'Indian, rich, and with a warmth of heart, pecu-'liar to his climate, has rescued my father from 'his troubles, satisfied his wants, and enabled 'him to accomplish his exchange: when I relate 'to you the manner in which this was done, you 'will be charmed. I can only now add, that it 'was by chance we found out that his name is 'Belcour, and that he is a friend of Mr Stock-'well's. I lose not a moment's time in making 'you acquainted with this fortunate event, for 'reasons which delicacy obliges me to suppress; 'but, perhaps, if you have not received the mo-'ney on your jewels, you will not think it neces-'sary now to do it. I have the honour to be,

'Dear madam,

'Most faithfully yours,

'CHARLES DUDLEY.'

Is this your doing, sir? Never was generosity so worthily exerted.

*Bel.* Or so greatly overpaid.

*Char.* After what you have now done for this noble, but indigent family, let me not scruple to unfold the whole situation of my heart to you.—

Know, then, sir, (and don't think the worse of me for the frankness of my declaration), that such is my attachment to the son of that worthy officer, whom you relieved, that the moment I am of age, and in possession of my fortune, I should hold myself the happiest of women to share it with young Dudley.

*Bel.* Say you so, madam? then, let me perish if I don't love and reverence you above all woman-kind! and, if such is your generous resolution, never wait till you're of age; life is too short, pleasure too fugitive; the soul grows narrower ever hour. I'll equip you for your escape; I'll convey you to the man of your heart, and away with you, then, to the first hospitable parson that will take you in.

*Char.* O blessed be the Torrid Zone for ever, whose rapid vegetation quickens nature into such benignity! These latitudes are made for politics and philosophy; friendship has no root in this soil. But, had I spirit to accept your offer, which is not improbable, would'nt it be a mortifying thing for a fond girl to find herself mistaken, and sent back to her home like a vagrant? and such, for what I know, might be my case.

*Bel.* Then, he ought to be proscribed the society of mankind for ever——Ay, ay; 'tis the sham sister that makes him thus indifferent; 'twill be a meritorious office to take that girl out of the way.

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Miss Dudley to wait on you, madam.

*Bel.* Who?

*Ser.* Miss Dudley.

*Char.* What's the matter, Mr Belcour? Are you frighted at the name of a pretty girl? 'Tis the sister of him we were speaking of—Pray, admit her.

*Bel.* The sister! So, so! he has imposed on her, too—This is an extraordinary visit, truly!—Upon my soul, the assurance of some folks is not to be accounted for. [*Aside.*

*Char.* I insist upon your not running away; you'll be charmed with Louisa Dudley.

*Bel.* Oh, yes, I am charmed with her.

*Char.* You have seen her, then, have you?

*Bel.* Yes, yes; I've seen her.

*Char.* Well, isn't she a delightful girl?

*Bet.* Very delightful.

*Char.* Why, you answer as if you was in a court of justice! O' my conscience, I believe you are caught! I've a notion she has tricked you out of your heart.

*Bel.* I believe she has, and you out of your jewels; for, to tell you the truth, she's the very person I gave them to.

*Char.* You gave her my jewels! Louisa Dudley my jewels? Admirable! inimitable! Oh, the sly little jade! But hush, here she comes; I don't know how I shall keep my countenance.

*Enter* LOUISA.

My dear, I'm rejoiced to see you: how d'ye do? I beg leave to introduce Mr Belcour, a very worthy friend of mine: I believe, Louisa, you have seen him before.

*Lou.* I have met the gentleman.

*Char.* You have met the gentleman! well, sir, and you have met the lady: in short, you have met each other; why, then, don't you speak to each other? How you both stand! tongue-tied, and fixed as statues!———Ha, ha, ha! Why you'll fall asleep by-and-by.

*Lou.* Fy upon you, fy upon you! is this fair?

*Bel.* Upon my soul, I never looked so like a fool in my life! the assurance of that girl puts me quite down. [*Aside.*

*Char.* Sir——Mr Belcour——Was it your pleasure to advance any thing? Not a syllable, Come, Louisa, women's wit, they say, is never at a loss—Nor you 'neither? Speechless both——Why, you was merry enough before this lady came in.

*Lou.* I am sorry I have been any interruption to your happiness, sir.

*Bel.* Madam!

*Char.* Madam! Is that all you can say? But come, my dear girl, I won't tease you. Apropos, I must shew you what a present this dumb gentleman has made me: are not these handsome diamonds?

*Lou.* Yes, indeed, they seem very fine; but I am no judge of these things.

*Char.* Oh, you wicked little hypocrite! you are no judge of these things, Louisa; you have no diamonds! not you!

*Lou.* You know I have not, Miss Rusport: you know those things are infinitely above my reach.

*Char.* Ha, ha, ha!

*Bel.* She does tell a lie with an admirable countenance, that's true enough.

*Lou.* What ails you, Charlotte? What impertinence have I been guilty of, that you should find it necessary to humble me at such a rate? If you are happy, long may you be so; but, surely, it can be no addition to it to make me miserable.

*Char.* So serious! there must be some mystery in this——Mr Belcour, will you leave us together? You see I treat you with all the familiarity of an old acquaintance already.

*Bel.* Oh, by all means, pray command me.—Miss Rusport, I am your most obedient. By your condescension in accepting these poor trifles, I am under eternal obligations to you—To you, Miss Dudley, I shall not offer a word on that subject: you despise finery; you have a soul above it; I adore your spirit; I was rather unprepared for meeting you here; but I shall

hope for an opportunity of making myself better known to you. [*Exit.*

*Char.* Louisa Dudley, you surprise me; I never saw you act thus before: can't you bear a little innocent raillery before the man of your heart?

*Lou.* The man of my heart, madam? Be assured I never was so visionary to aspire to any man whom Miss Rusport honours with her choice.

*Char.* My choice, my dear! Why, we are playing at cross-purposes: how entered it into your head that Mr Belcour was the man of my choice?

*Lou.* Why, did not he present you with those diamonds?

*Char.* Well, perhaps he did——and, pray, Louisa, have you no diamonds?

*Lon.* I diamonds, truly! Who should give me diamonds?

*Char.* Who, but this very gentleman? apropos, here comes your brother.

*Enter* CHARLES.

I insist upon referring our dispute to him: your sister and I, Charles, have a quarrel. Belcour, the hero of your letter, has just left us—some how or other, Louisa's bright eyes have caught him; and the poor fellow's fallen desperately in love with her—(don't interrupt me, hussy)—Well, that's excusable enough, you'll say; but the jest of the story is, that this hair-brained spark, who does nothing like other people, has given her the very identical jewels which you pledged for me to Mr Stockwell; and will you believe, that this little demure slut made up a face, and squeezed out three or four hypocritical tears, because I rallied her about it!

*Cha.* I'm all astonishment! Louisa, tell me, without reserve, has Mr Belcour given you any diamonds?

*Lou.* None; upon my honour!

*Cha.* Has he made any professions to you?

*Lou.* He has; but altogether in a style so whimsical and capricious, that the best which can be said of them is to tell you, that they seemed more the result of good spirits than good manners.

*Char.* Ay, ay; now the murder's out; he's in love with her, and she has no very great dislike to him; trust to my observation, Charles, for that: as to the diamonds, there's some mistake about them, and you must clear it up: three minutes conversation with him will put every thing in a right train; go, go, Charles; 'tis a brother's business; about it instantly; ten to one you'll find him over the way at Mr Stockwell's.

*Cha.* I confess I'm impatient to have the case cleared up. I'll take your advice, and find him out: good bye to you.

*Char.* Your servant; my life upon it you'll find Belcour a man of honour. Come, Louisa, let us adjourn to my dressing room. I've a little private business to transact with you, before the old lady comes up to tea and interrupts us.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.—FULMER'S *house.*

*Enter* FULMER *and* MRS FULMER.

*Ful.* PATTY, was not Mr Belcour with you?

*Mrs Ful.* He was; and is now shut up in my chamber, in high expectation of an interview with Miss Dudley; she's at present with her brother, and 'twas with some difficulty I persuaded my hot-headed spark to wait till he has left her.

*Ful.* Well, child; and what then?

*Mrs Ful.* Why then, Mr Fulmer, I think it will be time for you and me to steal a march, and be gone.

*Ful.* So, this is all the fruit of your ingenious project? a shameful overthrow, or a sudden flight?

*Mrs Ful.* Why, my project was a mere impromptu, and can, at worst, but quicken our departure a few days; you know we had fairly outlived our credit here, and a trip to Boulogne is no ways unseasonable. Nay, never droop, man. Hark! Hark! here's enough to bear charges.

[*Shewing a purse.*

*Ful.* Let me see, let me see: this weighs well; this is of the right sort: why your West Indian bled freely.

*Mrs Ful.* But that's not all: look here! Here are the sparklers! [*Shewing the jewels.*] Now, what d'ye think of my performances! eh? a foolish scheme, is not it—a silly woman—?

*Ful.* Thou art a Judith, a Joan of Arc, and I'll march under thy banners, girl, to the world's end. Come, let's begone; I've little to regret; my creditors may share the old books amongst them; they'll have occasion for philosophy to support their loss; they'll find enough upon my shelves: the world is my library; I read mankind—Now, Patty, lead the way.

*Mrs Ful.* Adieu, Belcour! [*Exeunt.*

### SCENE II.

*Enter* CHARLES DUDLEY *and* LOUISA.

*Cha.* Well, Louisa, I confess the force of what you say: I accept Miss Rusport's bounty; and, when you see my generous Charlotte, tell her—but have a care! there is a selfishness even in gratitude, when it is too profuse: to be overthankful for any one favour, is in effect to lay out for another; the best return I could make my benefactress would be, never to see her more.

*Lou.* I understand you.

*Cha.* We that are poor, Louisa, should be cautious: for this reason, I would guard you against Belcour; at least, till I can unravel the mystery of Miss Rusport's diamonds. I was disappointed of finding him at Mr Stockwell's, and am now going in search of him again: he may intend honourably; but, I confess to you, I am staggered; think no more of him, therefore, for the present: of this be sure, while I have life, and you have honour, I will protect you, or perish in your defence. [*Exit* CHA.

*Lou.* Think of him no more! Well, I'll obey; but if a wandering uninvited thought should creep by chance into my bosom, must I not give the harmless wretch a shelter? Oh! yes; the great artificer of the human heart knows every thread he wove into its fabric, nor puts his work to harder uses than it was made to bear: my wishes then, my guiltless ones, I mean, are free: how fast they spring within me at that sentence! Down, down, ye busy creatures! Whither would you carry me? Ah! there is one amongst you, a forward, new intruder, that, in the likeness of an offending, generous man, grows into favour with my heart. Fye, fye upon it! Belcour pursues, insults me; yet, such is the fatality of my condition, that what should rouse resentment, only calls up love.

*Enter* BELCOUR.

*Bel.* Alone, by all that's happy!

*Lou.* Ah!

*Bel.* Oh! shriek not, start not, stir not, loveliest creature! but let me kneel, and gaze upon your beauties!

*Lou.* Sir! Mr Belcour, rise! What is it you do?

*Bel.* See, I obey you; mould me as you will, behold your ready servant! New to your country, ignorant of your manners, habits, and desires, I put myself into your hands for instruction; make me only such as you can like yourself, and I shall be happy.

*Lou.* I must not hear this, Mr Belcour: go; should he, that parted from me but this minute, now return, I tremble for the consequence.

*Bel.* Fear nothing; let him come: I love you, madam; he'll find it hard to make me unsay that.

*Lou.* You terrify me! your impetuous temper frightens me; you know my situation; it is not generous to pursue me thus.

*Bel.* True; I do know your situation, your real one, Miss Dudley, and am resolved to snatch you from it: 'twill be a meritorious act. The old captain shall rejoice; Miss Rusport shall be made happy; and even he, even your beloved brother, with whose resentment you threaten me, shall, in the end, applaud and thank me. Come, thou art a dear, enchanting girl, and I'm determined not to live a minute longer without thee!

*Lou.* Hold! are you mad? I see you are a bold, assuming man, and know not where to stop.

*Bel.* Who, that beholds such beauty, can? By Heaven, you put my blood into a flame! Provoking girl! is it within the stretch of my fortune to content you? What is it you can further ask that I am not ready to grant?

*Lou.* Yes, with the same facility that you bestowed upon me Miss Rusport's diamonds. For shame! for shame! was that a manly story?

*Bel.* So! so! these devilish diamonds meet me every where—Let me perish if I meant you any harm. Oh! I could tear my tongue out for saying a word about the matter.

*Lou.* Go to her, then, and contradict it; till that is done, my reputation is at stake.

*Bel.* Her reputation! Now she has got upon that, she'll go on for ever.—What is there I will not do for your sake? I will go to Miss Rusport.

*Lou.* Do so; restore her own jewels to her, which, I suppose, you kept back for the purpose of presenting others to her of a greater value; but, for the future, Mr Belcour, when you would do a gallant action to that lady, don't let it be at my expence.

*Bel.* I see where she points: she is willing enough to give up Miss Rusport's diamonds, now she finds she shall be a gainer by the exchange. Be it so! 'tis what I wished!—[*Aside.*]—Well, madam, I will return Miss Rusport her own jewels, and you shall have others of tenfold their value.

*Lou.* No, sir; you err most widely; it is my good opinion, not my vanity, which you must bribe.

*Bel.* Why, what the devil would she have now?—Miss Dudley, it is my wish to obey and please you, but I have some apprehension that we mistake each other.

*Lou.* I think we do: tell me, then, in a few words, what is it you aim at?

*Bel.* In few words, then, and in plain honesty, I must tell you, so entirely am I captivated with you, that had you but been such as it would have become me to have called my wife, I had been happy in knowing you by that name; as it is, you are welcome to partake my fortune: give me, in return, your person, give me pleasure, give me love; free, disencumbered, anti-matrimonial love!

*Lou.* Stand off! and let me never see you more.

*Bel.* Hold, hold, thou dear, tormenting, tantalizing girl! Upon my knees, I swear, you shall not stir till you've consented to my bliss.

*Lou.* Unhand me, sir: O Charles! protect me, rescue me, redress me! [*Exit* LOU.

*Enter* CHARLES DUDLEY.

*Cha.* How's this! Rise, villain, and defend yourself!

*Bel.* Villain!

*Cha.* The man who wrongs that lady is a villain!—Draw!

*Bel.* Never fear me, young gentleman! Brand me for a coward, if I baulk you!

*Cha.* Yet hold! Let me not be too hasty: your name, I think, is Belcour?

*Bel.* Well, sir?

*Cha.* How is it, Mr Belcour, you have done this mean, unmanly wrong; beneath the mask of generosity, to give this fatal stab to our domestic peace? You might have had my thanks, my blessing; take my defiance now. 'Tis Dudley speaks to you; the brother, the protector of that injured lady.

*Bel.* The brother? Give yourself a truer title.

*Cha.* What is it you mean?

*Bel.* Come, come, I know both her and you. I found you, sir, (but how, or why, I know not) in the good graces of Miss Rusport—(yes, colour at the name!) I gave you no disturbance there, never broke in upon you in that rich and plenteous quarter; but, when I could have blasted all your projects with a word, spared you, in foolish pity spared you, nor rouzed her from the fond credulity in which your artifice had lulled her.

*Cha.* No, sir, nor boasted to her of the splendid present you had made my poor Louisa—the diamonds, Mr Belcour! How was that? What can you plead to that arraignment?

*Bel.* You question me too late; the name of Belcour, and of villain, never met before; had you inquired of me before you uttered that rash word, you might have saved yourself or me a mortal error: now, sir, I neither give nor take an explanation; so, come on! [*They fight.*

*Enter* LOUISA, *and afterwards* O'FLAHERTY.

*Lou.* Hold, hold! for Heaven's sake, hold! Charles! Mr Belcour! Help! Sir, sir; make haste, they'll murder one another!

*O'Fla.* Hell and confusion! What's all this uproar for? Can't you leave off cutting one another's throats, and mind what the poor girl says to you? You've done a notable thing, have not you both, to put her into such a flurry? I think, o' my conscience, she's the most frighted of the three.

*Cha.* Dear Louisa, recollect yourself; why did you interfere? 'Tis in your cause.

*Bel.* Now could I kill him for caressing her!

*O'Fla.* O sir, your most obedient! You are the gentleman I had the honour of meeting here before; you was then running off at full speed like a Calmuck; now you are tilting and driving like a Bedlamite with this lad here, that seems as mad as yourself: 'tis pity but your country had a little more employment for you both.

*Bel.* Mr Dudley, when you've recovered the lady, you know where I am to be found.

[*Exit* BEL.

*O'Fla.* Well, then, can't you stay where you are, and that will save the trouble of looking after you? Yon volatile fellow thinks to give a man the meeting by getting out of his way: by my soul, 'tis a roundabout method that of his! But, I think he called you Dudley. Hark'e, young man, are you the son of my friend the old captain?

*Cha.* I am. Help me to convey this lady to her chamber, and I shall be more at leisure to answer your questions.

*O'Fla.* Ay, will I: come along, pretty one. If you've had wrong done you, young man, you need look no further for a second; Dennis O'Flaherty's your man for that: but never draw your sword before a woman, Dudley; damn it, never, while you live, draw your sword before a woman.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—LADY RUSPORT'S *house.*

*Enter* LADY RUSPORT *and Servant.*

*Ser.* An elderly gentleman, who says his name is Varland, desires leave to wait on your ladyship.

*Lady Rus.* Shew him in; the very man I wish to see! Varland—he was sir Oliver's solicitor, and privy to all his affairs. He brings some good tidings; some fresh mortgage, or another bond come to light; they start up every day.

*Enter* VARLAND.

Mr Varland, I'm glad to see you; you're heartily welcome, honest Mr Varland; you and I have not met since our late irreparable loss: how have you passed your time this age?

*Var.* Truly, my lady, ill enough: I thought I must have followed good sir Oliver.

*Lady Rus.* Alack-a-day, poor man! Well, Mr Varland, you find me here, overwhelmed with trouble and fatigue; torn to pieces with a multiplicity of affairs; a great fortune poured upon me, unsought for and unexpected: 'twas my good father's will and pleasure it should be so, and I must submit.

*Var.* Your ladyship inherits under a will made in the year forty-five, immediately after captain Dudley's marriage with your sister.

*Lady Rus.* I do so, Mr Varland; I do so.

*Var.* I well remember it; I engrossed every syllable; but I am surprised to find your ladyship set so little store by this vast accession.

*Lady Rus.* Why, you know, Mr Varland, I am a moderate woman; I had enough before; a small matter satisfies me; and sir Stephen Rusport (Heaven be his portion!) took care I should not want that.

*Var.* Very true; very true, he did so; and I am overjoyed at finding your ladyship in this disposition; for, truth to say, I was not without apprehension the news I have to communicate would have been of some prejudice to your ladyship's tranquillity.

*Lady Rus.* News, sir! What news have you for me?

*Var.* Nay, nothing to alarm you: a trifle, in your present way of thinking: I have a will of sir Oliver's you have never seen.

*Lady Rus.* A will! Impossible! How came you by it, pray?

*Var.* I drew it up, at his command, in his last illness: it will save you a world of trouble; it gives his whole estate from you to his grandson, Charles Dudley.

*Lady Rus.* To Dudley! His estate to Charles Dudley! I can't support it! I shall faint! You've killed me, you vile man! I never shall survive it!

*Var.* Look'e there, now! I protest, I thought you would have rejoiced at being clear of the incumbrance.

*Lady Rus.* 'Tis false; 'tis all a forgery, concerted between you and Dudley; why, else, did I never hear of it before?

*Var.* Have patience, my lady, and I'll tell you.—By sir Oliver's direction, I was to deliver this will into no hands but his grandson, Dudley's: the young gentleman happened to be then in Scotland; I was dispatched thither in search of him: the hurry and fatigue of my journey brought on a fever by the way, which confined me in extreme danger for several days: upon my recovery, I pursued my journey, found young Dudley had left Scotland in the interim, and am now directed hither; where, as soon as I can find him, doubtless, I shall discharge my conscience, and fulfil my commission.

*Lady Rus.* Dudley, then, as yet, knows nothing of this will?

*Var.* Nothing; that secret rests with me.

*Lady Rus.* A thought occurs! by this fellow's talking of his conscience, I should guess it was upon sale.—[*Aside.*]—Come, Mr Varland, if 'tis as you say, I must submit. I was somewhat flurried at first, and forgot myself; I ask your pardon: this is no place to talk of business; step with me into my room; we will there compare the will, and resolve accordingly——Oh! would your fever had you, and I had your paper!

[*Exeunt.*

## SCENE VI.

*Enter* MISS RUSPORT, CHARLES, *and* O'FLAHERTY.

*Char.* So, so! My lady and her lawyer have retired to close confabulation: now, major, if you are the generous man I take you for, grant me one favour.

*O'Fla.* Faith will I, and not think much of my generosity neither; for, though it may not be in my power to do the favour you ask, look you, it can never be in my heart to refuse it.

*Cha.* Could this man's tongue do justice to his thoughts, how eloquent would he be! [*Aside.*

*Char.* Plant yourself, then, in that room: keep guard, for a few moments, upon the enemy's motions, in the chamber beyond; and, if they should attempt a sally, stop their march a moment, till your friend here can make good his retreat down the back-stairs.

*O'Fla.* A word to the wise! I'm an old campaigner; make the best use of your time; and trust me for tying the old cat up to the picket.

*Char.* Hush! hush! not so loud.

*Cha.* 'Tis the office of a centinel, major, you have undertaken, rather than that of a field-officer.

*O'Fla.* 'Tis the office of a friend, my dear boy; and, therefore, no disgrace to a general.

[*Exeunt.*

## SCENE VII.

*Enter* CHARLES *and* CHARLOTTE.

*Char.* Well, Charles, will you commit yourself to me for a few minutes?

*Cha.* Most readily; and let me, before one goes by, tender you the only payment I can ever make for your abundant generosity.

*Char.* Hold, hold! so vile a thing as money must not come between us. What shall I say? O Charles! O Dudley! What difficulties have you thrown upon me! Familiarly as we have lived, I shrink now at what I'm doing; and, anxiously as I have sought this opportunity, my fears almost persuade me to abandon it.

*Cha.* You alarm me.

*Char.* Your looks and actions have been so distant, and, at this moment, are so deterring, that, was it not for the hope that delicacy, and not disgust, inspires this conduct in you, I should sink with shame and apprehension: but time presses, and I must speak—and plainly too—— Was you now in possession of your grandfather's estate, as justly you ought to be; and was you inclined to seek a companion for life, should you, or should you not, in that case, honour your unworthy Charlotte with your choice?

*Cha.* My unworthy Charlotte! So judge me Heaven, there is not a circumstance on earth so valuable as your happiness, so dear to me as your person; but, to bring poverty, disgrace, reproach from friends, ridicule from all the world, upon a generous benefactress; thievishly to steal into an open, unreserved, ingenuous heart, O Charlotte! dear, unhappy girl, it is not to be done.

*Char.* Nay, now you rate too highly the poor advantages fortune alone has given me over you; how otherwise could we bring our merits to any balance? Come, my dear Charles, I have enough; make that enough still more, by sharing it with me: sole heiress of my father's fortune, a short time will put it in my disposal; in the mean while, you will be sent to join your regiment: let us prevent a separation, by setting out this very night for that happy country, where marriage still is free: carry me this moment to Belcour's lodgings.

*Cha.* Belcour's?——The name is ominous! there's murder in it: bloody inexorable honour! [*Aside.*

*Char.* D'ye pause? Put me into his hands, while you provide the means for our escape: he is the most generous, the most honourable of men.

*Cha.* Honourable! most honourable!

*Char.* Can you doubt it? Do you demur? Have you forgot your letter? Why, Belcour 'twas that prompted me to this proposal, that promised to supply the means, that nobly offered his unasked assistance——

*Enter* O'FLAHERTY, *hastily.*

*O'Fla.* Run, run! for holy St Antony's sake, to horse and away! The conference is broke up, and the old lady advances upon a full Piedmontese trot, within pistol-shot of your encampment.

*Char.* Here, here! down the back-stairs! O Charles, remember me!

*Cha.* Farewell! Now, now I feel myself a coward. [*Exit.*

*Char.* What does he mean?

*O'Fla.* Ask no questions, but be gone: she has cooled the lad's courage, and wonders he feels like a coward. There's a damned deal of mischief brewing between this hyena and her lawyer: egad, I'll step behind this screen and listen: a good soldier must sometimes fight in ambush, as well as open field. [*Retires.*

*Enter* LADY RUSPORT *and* VARLAND.

*Lady Rus.* Sure I heard somebody. Hark! No; only the servants going down the back-stairs. Well, Mr Varland, I think then we are agreed: you'll take my money; and your conscience no longer stands in your way.

*Var.* Your father was my benefactor; his will ought to be sacred; but, if I commit it to the flames, how will he be the wiser? Dudley, 'tis true, has done me no harm; but five thousand pounds will do me much good: so, in short, madam, I take your offer; I will confer with my clerk, who witnessed the will; and to-morrow morning put it into your hands, upon condition you put five thousand good pounds into mine.

*Lady Rus.* 'Tis a bargain: I'll be ready for you: farewell. [*Exit.*

*Var.* Let me consider—Five thousand pounds, prompt payment, for destroying this scrap of paper, not worth five farthings; 'tis a fortune easily earned; yes; and 'tis another man's fortune easily thrown away: 'tis a good round sum to be paid down at once for a bribe; but 'tis a damned rogue's trick in me to take it.

*O'Flu.* So, so! this fellow speaks truth to himself, though he lies to other people——But hush! [*Aside.*

*Var.* 'Tis breaking the trust of my benefactor; that's a foul crime! but he's dead, and can never reproach me with it: and 'tis robbing young Dudley of his lawful patrimony; that's a hard case: but he's alive, and knows nothing of the matter.

*O'Fla.* These lawyers are so used to bring off the rogueries of others, that they are never without an excuse for their own. [*Aside.*

*Var.* Were I assured now, that Dudley would give me half the money for producing this will, that lady Rusport does for concealing it, I would deal with him, and be an honest man at half price. I wish every gentleman of my profession could lay his hand on his heart, and say the same thing.

*O'Fla.* A bargain, old gentleman! Nay, never start nor stare! you wasn't afraid of your own conscience, never be afraid of me.

*Var.* Of you, sir! who are you, pray?

*O'Fla.* I'll tell you who I am: you seem to wish to be honest, but want the heart to set about it. Now, I am the very man in the world to make you so; for, if you do not give me up that paper this very instant, by the soul of me, fellow, I will not leave one whole bone in your skin that shan't be broken.

*Var.* What right have you, pray, to take this paper from me?

*O'Fla.* What right have you, pray, to keep it from young Dudley? I don't know what it contains, but I am apt to think it will be safer in my hands than in yours; therefore, give it me without more words, and save yourself a beating: do now; you had best.

*Var.* Well, sir, I may as well make a grace of necessity. There! I have acquitted my conscience, at the expence of five thousand pounds.

*O'Fla.* Five thousand pounds! Mercy upon me!—When there are such temptations in the law, can we wonder if some of the corps are a disgrace to it?

*Var.* Well, you have got the paper; if you are an honest man, give it to Charles Dudley.

*O'Fla.* An honest man! look at me, friend. I am a soldier; this is not the livery of a knave: I am an Irishman, honey; mine is not the country of dishonour. Now, sirrah, be gone; if you enter these doors, or give lady Rusport the least item of what has passed, I will cut off both your ears, and rob the pillory of its due.

*Var.* I wish I was once fairly out of his sight! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE VIII.—*A room in* STOCKWELL'S *House.*

*Enter* STOCKWELL.

*Stock.* I must disclose myself to Belcour; this noble instance of his generosity, which old Dudley has been relating, allies me to him at once; concealment becomes too painful; I shall be proud to own him for my son——But see, he's here!

BELCOUR *enters, and throws himself upon a sofa.*

*Bel.* O my curst tropical constitution! Would to Heaven I had been dropt upon the snows of Lapland, and never felt the blessed influence of the sun, so I had never burnt with these inflammatory passions!

*Stock.* So, so! you seem disordered, Mr Belcour?

*Bel.* Disordered, sir! Why did I ever quit the soil in which I grew? what evil planet drew me from that warm sunny region, where naked nature walks without disguise, into this cold, contriving, artificial country?

*Stock.* Come, sir, you've met a rascal—what of that? general conclusions are illiberal.

*Bel.* No, sir; I've met reflection by the way; I've come from folly, noise, and fury, and met a silent monitor—Well, well, a villain!—'twas not to be pardoned—pray, never mind me, sir.

*Stock.* Alas, my heart bleeds for him!

*Bel.* And yet I might have heard him: now, plague upon that blundering Irishman for coming in as he did! the hurry of the deed might palliate the event: deliberate execution has less to plead—Mr Stockwell, I am bad company to you.

*Stock.* Oh, sir, make no excuse. I think you have not found me forward to pry into the secrets of your pleasures and pursuits; 'tis not my disposition; but there are times, when want of curiosity would be want of friendship.

*Bel.* Ah, sir, mine is a case wherein you and I shall never think alike; the punctilious rules, by which I am bound, are not to be found in your ledgers, nor will pass current in the counting-house of a trader.

*Stock.* 'Tis very well, sir: if you think I can render you any service, it will be worth your trial to confide in me; if not, your secret is safer in your own bosom.

*Bel.* That sentiment demands my confidence: pray, sit down by me. You must know, I have an affair of honour on my hands with young Dudley; and, though I put up with no man's insult, yet I wish to take away no man's life.

*Stock.* I know the young man, and am apprised of your generosity to his father: what can have bred a quarrel between you?

*Bel.* A foolish passion on my side, and a haughty provocation on his. There is a girl, Mr Stockwell, whom I have unfortunately seen, of most uncommon beauty. She has, withal, an air of so much natural modesty, that had I not had good assurance of her being an attainable wanton, I declare I should as soon have thought of attempting the chastity of Diana.

*Enter Servant.*

*Stock.* Hey-day, do you interrupt us?

*Ser.* Sir, there's an Irish gentleman will take no denial; he says he must see Mr Belcour directly, upon business of the last consequence.

*Bel.* Admit him: 'tis the Irish officer that parted us, and brings me young Dudley's challenge: I should have made a long story of it, and he'll tell you in three words.

*Enter* O'FLAHERTY.

*O'Fla.* Save you, my dear: and you, sir! I have a little bit of a word in private for you.

*Bel.* Pray deliver your commands: this gentleman is my intimate friend.

*O'Fla.* Why, then, ensign Dudley will be glad to measure swords with you, yonder, at the London Tavern, in Bishopsgate-street, at nine o'clock—you know the place!

*Bel.* I do; and shall observe the appointment.

*O'Fla.* Will you be of the party, sir? We shall want a fourth hand.

*Stock.* Savage as the custom is, I close with your proposal; and, though I am not fully informed of the occasion of your quarrel, I shall rely on Mr Belcour's honour for the justice of it; and willingly stake my life in his defence.

*O'Fla.* Sir, you're a gentleman of honour, and I shall be glad of being better known to you—— But hark'e, Belcour, I had like to have forgot part of my errand: there is the money you gave old Dudley; you may tell it over, 'faith; 'tis a receipt in full: now the lad can put you to death with a safe conscience; and when he has done that job for you, let it be a warning how you attempt the sister of a man of honour.

*Bel.* The sister!

*O'Fla.* Ay, the sister; 'tis English, is it not? Or Irish; 'tis all one: you understand me? his sister, or Louisa Dudley, that's her name, I think, call her which you will. By St Patrick, 'tis a foolish piece of a business, Belcour, to go about to take away a poor girl's virtue from her, when there are so many to be met in this town, who have disposed of theirs to your hands. [*Exit.*

*Stock.* Why, I am thunderstruck! What is it you have done, and what is the shocking business in which I have engaged? If I understood him right, 'tis the sister of young Dudley you've been attempting: you talked to me of a professed wanton! the girl he speaks of has beauty enough indeed to inflame your desires, but she has honour, innocence, and simplicity, to awe the most licentious passion: if you have done that, Mr Belcour, I renounce you, I abandon you, I forswear all fellowship or friendship with you for ever.

*Bel.* Have patience for a moment: we do indeed speak of the same person—but she is not innocent, she is not young Dudley's sister.

*Stock.* Astonishing! Who told you this?

*Bel.* The woman where she lodges; the person who put me on the pursuit, and contrived our meetings.

*Stock.* What woman? what person?

*Bel.* Fulmer her name is: I warrant you I did not proceed without good grounds.

*Stock.* Fulmer! Fulmer!——Who waits?

*Enter a Servant.*

Send Mr Stukely hither directly. [*Exit Ser.*] I begin to see my way into this dark transaction. Mr Belcour, Mr Belcour! you are no match for the cunning and contrivances of this intriguing town.

*Enter* STUKELY.

Prithee, Stukely, what is the name of the woman and her husband, who were stopt upon suspicion of selling stolen diamonds at our next-door neighbour's, the jeweller?

*Stuke.* Fulmer.

*Stock.* So!

*Bel.* Can you procure me a sight of those diamonds?

*Stuke.* They are now in my hand; I was desired to shew them to Mr Stockwell.

*Stock.* Give them to me: what do I see? As I live, the very diamonds Miss Rusport sent hither, and which I intrusted to you to return.

*Bel.* Yes, but I betrayed that trust, and gave them to Mrs Fulmer to present to Miss Dudley.

*Stock.* With a view, no doubt, to bribe her to compliance?

*Bel.* I own it.

*Stock.* For shame, for shame! and 'twas this woman's intelligence you relied upon for Miss Dudley's character?

*Bel.* I thought she knew her; by Heaven, I would have died sooner than have insulted a woman of virtue, or a man of honour!

*Stock.* I think you would: but mark the danger of licentious courses: you are betrayed, robbed, abused, and, but for this providential discovery, in a fair way of being sent out of the world with all your follies on your head———Dear Stukely, go to my neighbour, tell him I have an owner for the jewels, and beg him to carry the people under custody to the London tavern, and wait for me there.—[*Exit* STUKELY.]—I fear the law does not provide a punishment to reach the villainy of these people; but how, in the name of wonder, could you take any thing on the word of such an informer?

*Bel.* Because I had not lived long enough in your country to know how few informers' words are to be taken: persuaded, however, as I was of Miss Dudley's guilt, I must own to you, I was staggered with the appearance of such innocence, especially when I saw her admitted into Miss Rusport's company.

*Stock.* Good Heaven! did you meet her at Miss Rusport's, and could you doubt of her being a woman of reputation?

*Bel.* By you, perhaps, such a mistake could not have been made; but in a perfect stranger, I hope, it is venial. I did not know what artifices young Dudley might have used to conceal her character; I did not know what disgrace attended the detection of it.

*Stock.* I see it was a trap laid for you, which you have narrowly escaped; you addressed a woman of honour with all the loose incense of a profane admirer, and you have drawn upon you the resentment of a man of honour, who thinks himself bound to protect her.——Well, sir, you must atone for this mistake.

*Bel.* To the lady, the most penitent submission I can make is justly due; but, in the execution of an act of justice, it shall never be said my soul was swayed by the least particle of fear: I have received a challenge from her brother; now, though I would give my fortune, almost my life itself, to purchase her happiness, yet I cannot abate her one scruple of my honour; I have been branded with the name of villain.

*Stock.* Ay, sir, you mistook her character, and he mistook yours; error begets error.

*Bel.* Villain, Mr Stockwell, is a harsh word.

*Stock.* It is a harsh word, and should be unsaid.

*Bel.* Come, come; it shall be unsaid.

*Stock.* Or else what follows? Why, the sword is drawn, and, to heal the wrongs you have done to the reputation of the sister, you make an honourable amends, by murdering the brother.

*Bel.* Murdering!

*Stock.* 'Tis thus religion writes and speaks the word; in the vocabulary of modern honour there is no such term—But come, I don't despair of satisfying the one, without alarming the other; that done, I have a discovery to unfold, that you will then, I hope, be fitted to receive.

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—*The London tavern.*

*Enter* O'FLAHERTY, STOCKWELL, CHARLES, *and* BELCOUR.

*O'Fla.* GENTLEMEN, well met! you understand each other's minds; and, as I see you have brought nothing but your swords, you may set to without any further ceremony.

*Stock.* You will not find us backward in any worthy cause; but, before we proceed any further, I would ask this young gentleman, whether he has any explanation to require of Mr Belcour.

*Cha.* Of Mr Belcour none; his actions speak for themselves: but to you, sir, I would fain propose one question.

*Stock.* Name it.

*Cha.* How is it, Mr Stockwell, that I meet a man of your character on this ground?

*Stock.* I will answer you directly, and my answer shall not displease you. I come hither in defence of the reputation of Miss Dudley, to redress the injuries of an innocent young lady.

*O'Fla.* By my soul the man knows he's to fight, only he mistakes which side he's to be of.

*Stock.* You are about to draw your sword to refute a charge against your sister's honour; you would do well, if there were no better means within reach; but the proofs of her innocence are lodged in our bosoms, and, if we fall, you destroy the evidence that most effectually can clear her fame.

*Cha.* How's that, sir?

*Stock.* This gentleman could best explain it to you, but you have given him an undeserved name that seals his lips against you: I am not under the same inhibition; and, if your anger can keep cool for a few minutes, I desire I may call in two witnesses, who will solve all difficulties at once. Here, waiter! bring those people in that are without.

*O'Fla.* Out upon it, what need is there for so much talking about the matter? can't you settle your differences first, and dispute about them afterwards?

FULMER *and* MRS FULMER *brought in.*

*Cha.* Fulmer and his wife in custody?

*Stock.* Yes, sir; these are your honest landlord and landlady, now in custody for defrauding this gentleman of certain diamonds intended to have been presented to your sister.—Be so good, Mrs Fulmer, to inform the company why you so grossly scandalized the reputation of an innocent lady, by persuading Mr Belcour, that Miss Dudley was not the sister, but the mistress, of this gentleman.

*Mrs Ful.* Sir, I don't know what right you have to question me, and I shall not answer till I see occasion.

*Stock.* Had you been as silent heretofore, madam, it would have saved you some trouble; but we don't want your confession. This letter, which you wrote to Mr Belcour, will explain your design; and these diamonds, which, of right, belong to Miss Rusport, will confirm your guilt: the law, Mrs Fulmer, will make you speak, though I can't. Constable, take charge of your prisoners.

*Ful.* Hold a moment! Mr Stockwell, you are a gentleman that knows the world, and a member of parliament; we shall not attempt to impose upon you; we know we are open to the law, and we know the utmost it can do against us. Mr Belcour has been ill used, to be sure, and so has Miss Dudley; and, for my own part, I always condemned the plot as a very foolish plot; but it was a child of Mrs Fulmer's brain, and she would not be put out of conceit with it.

*Mrs Ful.* You are a very foolish man, Mr Fulmer; so, prithee, hold your tongue.

*Ful.* Therefore, as I was saying, if you send her to Bridewell, it won't be amiss; and if you give her a little wholesome discipline, she may be the better for that too: but for me, Mr Stockwell, who am a man of letters, I must beseech you, sir, not to bring any disgrace upon my profession.

*Stock.* 'Tis you, Mr Fulmer, not I, that disgrace your profession; therefore begone, nor expect that I will betray the interests of mankind so far as to shew favour to such incendiaries. Take them away; I blush to think such wretches should have the power to set two honest men at variance. [*Exeunt* FULMER, *&c.*

*Cha.* Mr Belcour, we have mistaken each other; let us exchange forgiveness. I am convinced you intended no affront to my sister, and ask your pardon for the expression I was betrayed into.

*Bel.* 'Tis enough, sir; the error began on my side, and was Miss Dudley here, I would be the first to atone.

*Stock.* Let us all adjourn to my house, and conclude the evening like friends: you will find a little entertainment ready for you; and, if I am not mistaken, Miss Dudley and her father will make part of our company. Come, major, do you consent?

*O'Fla.* Most readily, Mr Stockwell; a quarrel, well made up, is better than a victory hardly earned. Give me your hand, Belcour; o' my conscience, you are too honest for the country you live in. And now, my dear lad, since peace is concluded on all sides, I have a discovery to make to you, which you must find out for yourself; for deuce take me if I rightly comprehend

it, only that your aunt Rusport is in a conspiracy against you, and a vile rogue of a lawyer, whose name I forget, at the bottom of it.

*Cha.* What conspiracy? Dear major, recollect yourself.

*O'Fla.* By my soul, I've no faculty at recollecting myself; but I've a paper somewhere about me, that will tell you more of the matter than I can. When I get to the merchant's, I will endeavour to find it.

*Cha.* Well, it must be in your own way; but I confess you have thoroughly roused my curiosity. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—STOCKWELL'S *house.*

*Enter* CAPTAIN DUDLEY, LOUISA, *and* STUKELY.

*Dud.* And are those wretches, Fulmer and his wife, in safe custody?

*Stuke.* They are in good hands; I accompanied them to the tavern, where your son was to be, and then went in search of you. You may be sure Mr Stockwell will enforce the law against them as far as it will go.

*Dud.* What mischief might their cursed machinations have produced, but for this timely discovery!

*Lou.* Still I am terrified!—I tremble with apprehension lest Mr Belcour's impetuosity, and Charles's spirit, should not wait for an explanation, but drive them both to extremes, before the mistake can be unravelled.

*Stuke.* Mr Stockwell is with them, madam, and you have nothing to fear—you cannot suppose he would ask you hither for any other purpose but to celebrate their reconciliation, and to receive Mr Belcour's atonement.

*Dud.* No, no, Louisa. Mr Stockwell's honour and discretion guard us against all danger or offence—he well knows we will endure no imputation on the honour of our family, and he certainly has invited us to receive satisfaction on that score in an amicable way.

*Lou.* Would to Heaven they were returned!

*Stuke.* You may expect them every minute; and see, madam, agreeable to your wish, they are here. [*Exit* STUKE.

*Enter* CHARLES, *and afterwards* STOCKWELL *and* O'FLAHERTY.

*Lou.* O Charles! O brother! how could you serve me so? how could you tell me you was going to lady Rusport's, and then set out with a design of fighting Mr Belcour? But where is he? Where is your antagonist?

*Stock.* Captain, I am proud to see you; and you, Miss Dudley, do me particular honour. We have been adjusting, sir, a very extraordinary and dangerous mistake, which, I take for granted, my friend Stukely has explained to you.

*Dud.* He has. I have too good an opinion of Mr Belcour to believe he could be guilty of a designed affront to an innocent girl; and I am much too well acquainted with your character, to suppose you could abet him in such design; I have no doubt, therefore, all things will be set to rights in very few words, when we have the pleasure of seeing Mr Belcour.

*Stock.* He has only stept into the compting-house, and will wait upon you directly. You will not be over strict, madam, in weighing Mr Belcour's conduct to the minutest scruple. His manners, passions, and opinions, are not, as yet, assimilated to this climate; he comes amongst you a new character, an inhabitant of a new world; and both hospitality, as well as pity, recommend him to our indulgence.

*Enter* BELCOUR, *who bows to* MISS DUDLEY.

*Bel.* I am happy, and ashamed, to see you—no man in his senses would offend you—I forfeited mine, and erred against the light of the sun, when I overlooked your virtues—but your beauty was predominant, and hid them from my sight—I now perceive I was the dupe of a most improbable report, and humbly entreat your pardon.

*Lou.* Think no more of it; 'twas a mistake.

*Bel.* My life has been composed of little else; 'twas founded in mystery, and has continued in error: I was once given to hope, Mr Stockwell, that you was to have delivered me from these difficulties; but, either I do not deserve your confidence, or I was deceived in my expectations.

*Stock.* When this lady has confirmed your pardon, I shall hold you deserving of my confidence.

*Lou.* That was granted the moment it was asked.

*Bel.* To prove my title to his confidence, honour me so far with yours, as to allow me a few minutes conversation in private with you.

[*She turns to her father.*

*Dud.* By all means, Louisa; come, Mr Stockwell, let us go into another room.

*Cha.* And now, major O'Flaherty, I claim your promise of a sight of the paper, that is to unravel this conspiracy of my aunt Rusport's: I think I have waited with great patience.

*O'Fla.* I have been endeavouring to call to mind what it was I overheard—I've got the paper, and will give you the best account I can of the whole transaction.

[*Exeunt.*

*Enter* BELCOUR *and* LOUISA.

*Bel.* Miss Dudley, I have solicited this audience, to repeat to you my penitence and confusion. How shall I atone? What reparation can I make to you and virtue?

*Lou.* To me there's nothing due, nor any thing

demanded of you, but your more favourable opinion for the future, if you should chance to think of me. Upon the part of virtue, I'm not empowered to speak; but if, hereafter, as you range through life, you should surprise her in the person of some wretched female, poor as myself, and not so well protected, enforce not your advantage, complete not your licentious triumph, but raise her, rescue her from shame and sorrow, and reconcile her to herself again.

*Bel.* I will, I will: by bearing your idea ever present in my thoughts, virtue shall keep an advocate within me. But tell me, loveliest, when you pardon the offence, can you, all perfect as you are, approve of the offender? As I now cease to view you in that false light I lately did, can you, and, in the fulness of your bounty, will you, cease also to reflect upon the libertine addresses I have paid you, and look upon me as your reformed, your rational admirer?

*Lou.* Are sudden reformations apt to last? and how can I be sure the first fair face you meet will not ensnare affections so unsteady, and that I shall not lose you lightly as I gained you?

*Bel.* Because, though you conquered me by surprise, I have no inclination to rebel; because, since the first moment that I saw you, every instant has improved you in my eyes; because, by principle as well as passion, I am unalterably yours: in short, there are ten thousand causes for my love to you:—would to Heaven I could plant one in your soft bosom, that might move you to return it!

*Lou.* Nay, Mr Belcour——

*Bel.* I know I am not worthy your regard. I know I'm tainted with a thousand faults, sick of a thousand follies; but there's a healing virtue in your eyes that makes recovery certain. I cannot be a villain in your arms.

*Lou.* That you can never be: whomever you shall honour with your choice, my life upon't that woman will be happy: it is not from suspicion that I hesitate, it is from honour: 'tis the severity of my condition: it is the world, that never will interpret fairly in our case.

*Bel.* Oh, what am I? and who in this wide world concerns himself for such a nameless, such a friendless thing as I am? I see, Miss Dudley, I've not yet obtained your pardon.

*Lou.* Nay, that you are in full possession of.

*Bel.* Oh, seal it with your hand then, loveliest of women; confirm it with your heart; make me honourably happy, and crown your penitent, not with your pardon only, but your love.

*Lou.* My love!———

*Bel.* By Heaven, my soul is conquered with your virtues, more than my eyes are ravished with your beauty! Oh, may this soft, this sensitive alarm, be happy, be auspicious! Doubt not, deliberate not, delay not. If happiness be the end of life, why do we slip a moment?

*Enter* O'FLAHERTY, *and afterwards* DUDLEY *and* CHARLES *with* STOCKWELL.

*O'Fla.* Joy, joy, joy! Sing, dance, leap, laugh for joy! Ha' done making love, and fall down on your knees to every saint in the calendar; for they're all on your side, and honest St. Patrick at the head of them.

*Cha.* O Louisa, such an event! By the luckiest chance in life, we have discovered a will of my grandfather's, made in his last illness, by which he cuts off my aunt Rusport with a small annuity, and leaves me heir to his whole estate, with a fortune of fifteen thousand pounds to yourself.

*Lou.* What is it you tell me? O, sir, instruct me to support this unexpected turn of fortune.

[*To her father.*

*Dud.* Name not fortune; 'tis the work of Providence——'tis the justice of Heaven, that would not suffer innocence to be oppressed, nor your base aunt to prosper in her cruelty and cunning.

[*A servant whispers* BELCOUR, *and he goes out.*]

*O'Fla.* You shall pardon me, captain Dudley, but you must not overlook St Patrick neither;—for, by my soul, if he had not put it into my head to slip behind the screen when your righteteous aunt and the lawyer were plotting togegether, I don't see how you would ever have come at the paper there, that master Stockwell is reading.

*Dud.* True, my good friend; you are the father of this discovery; but how did you contrive to get this will from the lawyer?

*O'Fla.* By force, my dear—the only way of getting any thing from a lawyer's clutches.

*Stock.* Well, major, when he brings his action of assault and battery against you, the least Dudley can do is, to defend you with the weapons you have put into his hands.

*Cha.* That I am bound to do; and after the happiness I shall have in sheltering a father's age from the vicissitudes of life, my next delight will be in offering you an asylum in the bosom of your country.

*O'Fla.* And upon my soul, my dear, 'tis high time I was there; for 'tis now thirty long years since I set foot in my native country—and, by the power of St Patrick I swear, I think it's worth all the rest of the world put together.

*Dud.* Ay, major, much about that time have I been beating the round of service, and 'twere well for us both to give over: we have stood many a tough gale, and abundance of hard blows; but Charles shall lay us up in a little private, but safe, harbour, where we'll rest from our labours, and peacefully wind up the remainder of our days.

*O'Fla.* Agreed; and you may take it as a proof of my esteem, young man, that major O'Flaherty accepts a favour at your hands——for,

by Heaven, I'd sooner starve than say, 'I thank you' to the man I despise. But I believe you are an honest lad, and I am glad you have trounced the old cat—for, on my conscience, I believe I must otherwise have married her myself, to have let you in for a share of her fortune.

*Stock.* Hey-day, what's become of Belcour?

*Lou.* One of your servants called him out just now, and seemingly on some earnest occasion.

*Stock.* I hope, Miss Dudley, he has atoned to you as a gentleman ought?

*Lou.* Mr Belcour, sir, will always do what a gentleman ought—and, in my case, I fear only you will think he has done too much.

*Stock.* What has he done? and what can be too much? Pray, Heaven, it may be as I wish! [*Aside.*

*Dud.* Let us hear it, child?

*Lou.* With confusion for my own unworthiness, I confess to you he has offered me——

*Stock.* Himself?

*Lou.* 'Tis true.

*Stock.* Then, I am happy: all my doubts, my cares are over, and I may own him for my son. Why, these are joyful tidings: come, my good friend, assist me in disposing your lovely daughter to accept this returning prodigal: he is no unprincipled, no hardened libertine; his love for you and virtue is the same.

*Dud.* 'Twere vile ingratitude in me to doubt his merit—What says my child?

*O'Fla.* Begging your pardon now, 'tis a frivolous sort of a question, that of yours; for you may see plainly enough, by the young lady's looks, that she says a great deal, though she speaks never a word.

*Cha.* Well, sister, I believe the major has fairly interpreted the state of your heart.

*Lou.* I own it; and what must that heart be, which love, honour and benevolence, like Mr Belcour's, can make no impression on?

*Stock.* I thank you. What happiness has this hour brought to pass!

*O'Fla.* Why don't we all sit down to supper, then, and make a night on't?

*Stock.* Hold, here comes Belcour.

BELCOUR *introducing* MISS RUSPORT.

*Bel.* Mr Dudley, here is a fair refugee, who properly comes under your protection: she is equipt for Scotland; but your good fortune, which I have related to her, seems inclined to save you both the journey——Nay, madam, never go back; you are amongst friends.

*Cha.* Charlotte!

*Char.* The same; that fond officious girl, that haunts you every where; that persecuting spirit———

*Cha.* Say rather, that protecting angel; such you have been to me.

*Char.* O, Charles! you have an honest, but proud heart.

*Cha.* Nay, chide me not, dear Charlotte.

*Bel.* Seal up her lips, then; she is an adorable girl; her arms are open to you; and love and happiness are ready to receive you.

*Cha.* Thus, then, I claim my dear, my destined wife. [*Embracing her.*

*Enter* LADY RUSPORT.

*Lady Rus.* Hey-day! mighty fine! wife truly! mighty well! kissing, embracing——did ever any thing equal this? Why, you shameless hussy! But I won't condescend to waste a word upon you. You, sir, you, Mr Stockwell, you fine, sanctified, fair-dealing man of conscience, is this the principle you trade upon? Is this your neighbourly system, to keep a house of reception for run-away daughters, and young beggarly fortune-hunters?

*O'Fla.* Be advised now, and don't put yourself in such a passion; we were all very happy till you came.

*Lady Rus.* Stand away, sir! have not I a reason to be in a passion?

*O'Fla.* Indeed, honey, and you have, if you knew all.

*Lady Rus.* Come, madam, I have found out your haunts; dispose yourself to return home with me. Young man, let me never see you within my doors again. Mr Stockwell, I shall report your behaviour, depend upon it.

*Stock.* Hold, madam; I cannot consent to lose Miss Rusport's company this evening, and I am persuaded you won't insist upon it: 'tis an unmotherly action to interrupt your daughter's happiness in this manner; believe me it is.

*Lady Rus.* Her happiness, truly! upon my word! and I suppose 'tis an unmotherly action to interrupt her ruin; for, what but ruin must it be to marry a beggar? I think my sister had a proof of that, sir, when she made choice of you. [*To* CAPT. DUDLEY.

*Dud.* Don't be too lavish of your spirits, lady Rusport.

*O'Fla.* By my soul, you'll have occasion for a sip of the cordial elixir, by and by.

*Stock.* It don't appear to me, madam, that Mr Dudley can be called a beggar.

*Lady Rus.* But it appears to me, Mr Stockwell—I am apt to think a pair of colours cannot furnish settlement quite sufficient for the heiress of sir Stephen Rusport.

*Char.* But a good estate, in aid of a commission, may do something.

*Lady Rus.* A good estate, truly! where should he get a good estate, pray?

*Stock.* Why, suppose now a worthy old gentleman, on his death bed, should have taken it in mind to leave him one——

*Lady Rus.* Ha! what's that you say?

*O'Fla.* O ho! you begin to smell a plot, do you?

*Stock.* Suppose there should be a paper in the world that runs thus——'I do hereby give and 'bequeath all my estates, real and personal, to 'Charles Dudley, son of my late daughter, Lou-'isa,' &c. &c. &c.

*Lady Rus.* Why, I am thunderstruck! By what contrivance, what villainy, did you get possession of that paper?

*Stock.* There was no villainy, madam, in getting possession of it: the crime was in concealing it, none in bringing it to light.

*Lady Rus.* Oh, that cursed lawyer, Varland!

*O'Fla.* You may say that, faith! he is a cursed lawyer, and a cursed piece of work I had to get the paper from him. Your ladyship now was to have paid him five thousand pounds for it—I forced him to give it me of his own accord, for nothing at all, at all.

*Lady Rus.* Is it you that have done this? Am I foiled by your blundering contrivances, after all?

*O'Fla.* 'Twas a blunder, faith, but as natural a one as if I had made it o' purpose.

*Cha.* Come, let us not oppress the fallen; do right even now, and you shall have no cause to complain.

*Lady Rus.* Am I become an object of your pity, then? Insufferable! Confusion light amongst you! Marry and be wretched: let me never see you more. [*Exit.*

*Char.* She is outrageous; I suffer for her, and blush to see her thus exposed.

*Cha.* Come, Charlotte, don't let this angry woman disturb our happiness: we will save her in spite of herself; your father's memory shall not be stained by the discredit of his second choice.

*Char.* I trust implicitly to your discretion, and am in all things yours.

*Bel.* Now, lovely but obdurate, does not this example soften?

*Lou.* What can you ask for more? Accept my hand, accept my willing heart.

*Bel.* O bliss unutterable! brother, father, friend, and you, the author of this general joy—

*O'Fla.* Blessings of St Patrick upon us all! 'Tis a night of wonderful and surprising ups and downs: I wish we were all fairly set down to supper, and there was an end on't.

*Stock.* Hold for a moment! I have yet one word to interpose——Entitled, by my friendship, to a voice in your disposal, I have approved your match: there yet remains a father's consent to be obtained.

*Bel.* Have I a father!

*Stock.* You have a father: did not I tell you I had a discovery to make? Compose yourself: you have a father, who observes, who knows, who loves you.

*Bel.* Keep me no longer in suspense! my heart is softened for the affecting discovery, and nature fits me to receive his blessing.

*Stock.* I am your father.

*Bel.* My father! Do I live?

*Stock.* I am your father.

*Bel.* It is too much; my happiness overpowers me: to gain a friend, and find a father, is too much: I blush to think how little I deserve you. [*They embrace.*

*Dud.* See, children, how many new relations spring from this night's unforeseen events, to endear us to each other.

*O'Fla.* O' my conscience, I think we shall be all related by and by.

*Stock.* How happily has this evening concluded, and yet how threatening was its approach! Let us repair to the supper-room, where I will unfold to you every circumstance of my mysterious story. Yes, Belcour, I have watched you with a patient, but inquiring eye; and I have discovered, through the veil of some irregularities, a heart beaming with benevolence, an animated nature, fallible, indeed, but not incorrigible; and your election of this excellent young lady makes me glory in acknowledging you to be my son.

*Bel.* I thank you—and, in my turn, glory in the father I have gained: sensibly imprest with gratitude for such extraordinary dispensations, I beseech you, amiable Louisa, for the time to come, whenever you perceive me deviating into error or offence, bring only to my mind the Providence of this night, and I will turn to reason, and obey. [*Exeunt omnes.*

# SHE STOOPS TO CONQUER:

OR,

# THE MISTAKES OF A NIGHT.

BY

*GOLDSMITH.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### MEN.

SIR CHARLES MARLOW.
YOUNG MARLOW, *his son.*
HARDCASTLE, *an old country gentleman.*
HASTINGS, *friend to* YOUNG MARLOW.
TONY LUMPKIN, *a country booby.*
DIGGORY, *butler to* HARDCASTLE.

### WOMEN.

MRS HARDCASTLE, *affecting the airs of fashion.*
MISS HARDCASTLE, *her daughter.*
MISS NEVILLE, *her niece, attached to* HASTINGS.
*Maid.*
*Landlord, servants, &c.*

*Scene—An English county; chiefly* MR HARDCASTLE'S *house.*

## ACT I.

SCENE I.——*A chamber in an old-fashioned house.*

*Enter* MRS HARDCASTLE *and* MR HARDCASTLE

*Mrs Hard.* I vow, Mr Hardcastle, you're very particular. Is there a creature in the whole country, but ourselves, that does not take a trip to town now and then, to rub off the rust a little! There's the two Miss Hoggs, and our neighbour, Mrs Grigsby, go to take a month's polishing every winter.

*Hard.* Ay, and bring back vanity and affectation to last them the whole year. I wonder why London cannot keep its own fools at home. In my time, the follies of the town crept slowly among us; but now, they travel faster than a stage-coach. Its fopperies come down, not only as inside passengers, but in the very basket.

*Mrs Hard.* Ay, your times were fine times, indeed: you have been telling us of them for many a long year. Here we live in an old rumbling mansion, that looks for all the world like, an inn, but that we never see company. Our best visitors are old Mrs Oddfish, the curate's wife and little Cripplegate, the lame dancing master; and all our entertainment your old stories of Prince Eugene and the duke of Marlboroug. I hate such old-fashioned trumpery.

*Hard.* And I love it. I love every thing that's old: old friends, old times, old manners, old books, old wine; and, I believe, Dorothy, [*To-*

*king her hand.*] you'll own I have been pretty fond of an old wife.

*Mrs Hard.* Lord, Mr Hardcastle, you're for ever at your Dorothy's, and your old wife's. You may be a Darby, but I'll be no Joan, I promise you. I'm not so old as you'd make me by more than one good year. Add twenty to twenty, and make money of that.

*Hard.* Let me see—twenty added to twenty, makes just fifty and seven.

*Mrs Hard.* Its false, Mr Hardcastle: I was but twenty when I was brought to bed of Tony, that I had by Mr Lumpkin, my first husband: and he's not come to years of discretion yet.

*Hard.* Nor ever will, I dare answer for him. Ay, you have taught him finely.

*Mrs Hard.* No matter, Tony Lumpkin has a good fortune. My son is not to live by his learning. I don't think a boy wants much learning to spend fifteen hundred a year.

*Hard.* Learning, quotha! a mere composition of tricks and mischief.

*Mrs Hard.* Humour, my dear: nothing but humour. Come, Mr Hardcastle, you must allow the boy a little humour.

*Hard.* I'd sooner allow him an horse-pond. If burning the footmen's shoes, frighting the maids, worrying the kittens, be humour, he has it. It was but yesterday he fastened my wig to the back of my chair, and when I went to make a bow, I popt my bald head in Mrs Frizzle's face.

*Mrs Hard.* And am I to blame? The poor boy was always too sickly to do any good. A school would be his death. When he comes to be a little stronger, who knows what a year or two's Latin may do for him?

*Hard.* Latin for him! A cat and a fiddle. No, no; the ale-house and the stable are the only schools he'll ever go to.

*Mrs Hard.* Well, we must not snub the poor boy now, for I believe we shan't have him long among us. Any body that looks in his face may see he's consumptive.

*Hard.* Ay, if growing too fat be one of the symptoms.

*Mrs Hard.* He coughs sometimes.

*Hard.* Yes, when his liquor goes the wrong way.

*Mrs Hard.* I'm actually afraid of his lungs.

*Hard.* And truly so am I; for he sometimes whoops like a speaking trumpet—[*Tony hallooing behind the scenes.*]—O there he goes!—A very consumptive figure, truly!

*Enter* TONY, *crossing the stage.*

*Mrs Hard.* Tony, where are you going, my charmer? Won't you give papa and I a little of your company, lovee?

*Tony.* I'm in haste, mother; I cannot stay.

*Mrs Hard.* You shan't venture out this raw evening, my dear: You look most shockingly.

*Tony.* I can't stay, I tell you. The Three Pigeons expects me down every moment. There's some fun going forward.

*Hard.* Ay—the ale-house, the old place: I thought so.

*Mrs Hard.* A low, paltry set of fellows.

*Tony.* Not so low neither. There's Dick Muggins, the exciseman, Jack Slang, the horse doctor, Little Aminadab, that grinds the music box, and Tom Twist, that spins the pewter platter.

*Mrs Hard.* Pray, my dear, disappoint them for one night at least!

*Tony.* As for disappointing them, I should not so much mind; but I can't abide to disappoint myself.

*Mrs Hard.* [*Detaining him.*] You shan't go.

*Tony.* I will, I tell you.

*Mrs Hard.* I say, you shan't.

*Tony.* We'll see which is strongest, you or I.

[*Exit, hawling her out.*

*Hard.* Ay, there goes a pair that only spoil each other. But is not the whole age in a combination to drive sense and discretion out of doors? There's my pretty darling Kate; the fashions of the times have almost infected her, too. By living a year or two in town, she is as fond of gauze, and French frippery, as the best of them.

*Enter* MISS HARDCASTLE.

Blessings on my pretty innocence!—Drest out as usual, my Kate. Goodness! What a quantity of superfluous silk hast thou got about thee, girl! I could never teach the fools of this age, that the indigent world could be clothed out of the trimmings of the vain.

*Miss Hard.* You know our agreement, sir.—You allow me the morning to receive and pay visits, and to dress in my own manner; and, in the evening, I put on my housewife's dress to please you.

*Hard.* Well, remember, I insist on the terms of our agreement; and, by the by, I believe I shall have occasion to try your obedience this very evening.

*Miss Hard.* I protest, sir, I don't comprehend your meaning.

*Hard.* Then, to be plain with you, Kate, I expect the young gentleman, I have chosen to be your husband, from town this very day. I have his father's letter, in which he informs me his son is set out, and that he intends to follow himself shortly after.

*Miss Hard.* Indeed! I wish I had known something of this before! Bless me, how shall I behave? It is a thousand to one I shan't like him; our meeting will be so formal, and so like a thing of business, that I shall find no room for friendship or esteem.

*Hard.* Depend upon it, child, I'll never controul your choice: but Mr Marlow, whom I have pitched upon, is the son of my old friend

Sir Charles Marlow, of whom you have heard me talk so often. The young gentleman has been bred a scholar, and is designed for an employment in the service of his country. I am told he's a man of an excellent understanding.

*Miss Hard.* Is he?

*Hard.* Very generous.

*Miss Hard.* I believe I shall like him.

*Hard.* Young and brave.

*Miss Hard.* I'm sure I shall like him.

*Hard.* And very handsome.

*Miss Hard.* My dear papa, say no more [*kissing his hand.*]; he's mine, I'll have him.

*Hard.* And, to crown all, Kate, he's one of the most bashful and reserved young fellows in all the world.

*Miss Hard.* Eh! you have frozen me to death again. That word, reserved, has undone all the rest of his accomplishments. A reserved lover, it is said, always makes a suspicious husband.

*Hard.* On the contrary, modesty seldom resides in a breast that is not enriched with nobler virtues. It was the very feature in his character that first struck me.

*Miss Hard.* He must have more striking features to catch me, I promise you. However, if he be so young, so handsome, and so every thing, as you mention, I believe he'll do still. I think I'll have him.

*Hard.* Ay, Kate, but there is still an obstacle. It's more than an even wager he may not have you.

*Miss Hard.* My dear papa, why will you mortify one so?—Well, if he refuses, instead of breaking my heart at his indifference, I'll only break my glass for its flattery; set my cap to some newer fashion, and look out for some less difficult admirer.

*Hard.* Bravely resolved! In the mean time, I'll go prepare the servants for his reception. As we seldom see company, they want as much training as a company of recruits, the first day's muster. [*Exit.*

*Miss Hard.* Lud! this news of papa's puts me all in a flutter. Young, handsome! these he put last; but I put them foremost. Sensible, good-natured; I like all that. But then reserved, and sheepish! that's much against him. Yet can't he be cured of his timidity, by being taught to be proud of his wife? Yes, and can't I—But I vow I'm disposing of the husband, before I have secured the lover.

*Enter* MISS NEVILLE.

I'm glad you're come, Neville, my dear. Tell me, Constance, how do I look this evening! Is there any thing whimsical about me? Is it one of my well looking days, child? Am I in face to day?

*Miss Nev.* Perfectly, my dear. Yet now I look again—bless me!—sure no accident has happened among the canary birds, or the gold fishes. Has your brother or the cat been meddling? Or has the last novel been too moving?

*Miss Hard.* No; nothing of all this. I have been threatened—I can scarce get it out—I have been threatened—with a lover.

*Miss Nev.* And his name——

*Miss Hard.* Is Marlow.

*Miss Nev.* Indeed!

*Miss Hard.* The son of sir Charles Marlow.

*Miss Nev.* As I live, the most intimate friend of Mr Hastings, my admirer! They are never asunder. I believe you must have seen him when we lived in town.

*Miss Hard.* Never.

*Miss Nev.* He's a very singular character, I assure you. Among women of reputation and virtue, he is the modestest man alive; but his acquaintance give him a very different character among creatures of another stamp: you understand me?

*Miss Hard.* An odd character, indeed! I shall never be able to manage him. What shall I do? Pshaw, think no more of him, but trust to occurrences for success. But how goes on your own affair, my dear? has my mother been courting you for my brother Tony, as usual?

*Miss Nev.* I have just come from one of our agreeable tete-a-tetes. She has been saying a hundred tender things, and setting off her pretty monster as the very pink of perfection.

*Miss Hard.* And her partiality is such, that she actually thinks him so. A fortune like yours is no small temptation. Besides, as she has the sole management of it, I'm not surprised to see her unwilling to let it go out of the family.

*Miss Nev.* A fortune like mine, which chiefly consists in jewels, is no such mighty temptation. But, at any rate, if my dear Hastings be but constant, I make no doubt to be too hard for her at last. However, I let her suppose that I am in love with her son, and she never once dreams that my affections are fixed upon another.

*Miss Hard.* My good brother holds out stoutly. I could almost love him for hating you so.

*Miss Nev.* It is a good natured creature at bottom, and I'm sure would wish to see me married to any body but himself. But my aunt's bell rings for our afternoon's walk round the improvements. Allons! Courage is necessary, as our affairs are critical.

*Miss Hard.* Would it were bed time, and all were well! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*An alehouse room.*

*Several shabby fellows, with punch and tobacco.* TONY *at the head of the table, a little higher than the rest: A mallet in his hand.*

*Omnes.* Hurrea, hurrea, hurrea! bravo!

1*st Fel.* Now, gentlemen, silence for a song.

The 'Squire is going to knock himself down for a song.

*Omnes.* Ay, a song, a song!

*Tony.* Then I'll sing you, gentlemen, a song I made upon this ale-house, the Three Pigeons.

SONG.

*Let school-masters puzzle their brain,*
*With grammar, and nonsense, and learning;*
*Good liquor, I stoutly maintain,*
*Gives Genus a better discerning.*
*Let them brag of their Heathenish Gods,*
*Their Lethes, their Styxes, and Stygians:*
*Their Quis, and their Quæs, and their Quods,*
*They're all but a parcel of Pigeons.*
*Toroddle, toroddle, toroll!*

*When Methodist preachers come down,*
*A preaching that drinking is sinful,*
*I'll wager the rascals a crown,*
*They always preach best with a skinful.*
*But when you come down with your pence,*
*For a slice of their scurvy religion,*
*I'll leave it to all men of sense,*
*But you my good friends are the Pigeon.*
*Toroddle, toroddle, toroll!*

*Then come, put the jorum about,*
*And let us be merry and clever,*
*Our hearts and our liquors are stout,*
*Here's the Three Jolly Pigeons for ever!*
*Let some cry up woodcock or hare,*
*Your bustards, your ducks, and your widgeons;*
*But of all the birds in the air,*
*Here's a health to the Three Jolly Pigeons!*
*Toroddle, toroddle, toroll!*

*Omnes.* Bravo, bravo!

1*st Fel.* The 'Squire has got spunk in him.

2*d Fel.* I loves to hear him sing, bekeays he never gives us nothing that's low.

3*d Fel.* O, damn any thing that's low! I cannot bear it.

4*th Fel.* The genteel thing is the genteel thing at any time. If so be that a gentleman bees in a concatenation accordingly.

3*d Fel.* I like the maxum of it, Master Muggins. What though I am obligated to dance a bear, a man may be a gentleman for all that. May this be my poison, if my bear ever dances but to the very genteelest of tunes! Water Parted, or the minuet in Ariadne.

2*d Fel.* What a pity it is the 'squire is not come to his own! It would be well for all the publicans within ten miles round of him.

*Tony.* Ecod, and so it would, Master Slang. I'd then shew what it was to keep choice of company.

2*d Fel.* O he takes after his own father for that. To be sure, old 'squire Lumpkin was the finest gentleman I ever set my eyes on. For winding the streight horn, or beating a thicket for a hare, or a wench, he never had his fellow. It was a saying in the place, that he kept the best horses, dogs, and girls, in the whole county.

*Tony.* Ecod, and when I'm of age, I'll be no bastard, I promise you. I have been thinking of Bett Bouncer and the miller's grey mare to begin with. But come, my boys, drink about and be merry, for you pay no reckoning. Well Stingo, what's the matter?

*Enter Landlord.*

*Land.* There be two gentlemen in a post-chaise at the door. They have lost their way upon the forest; and they are talking something about Mr Hardcastle.

*Tony.* As sure as can be, one of them must be the gentleman that's coming down to court my sister. Do they seem to be Londoners?

*Land.* I believe they may. They look woundily like Frenchmen.

*Tony.* Then desire them to step this way, and I'll set them right in a twinkling. [*Exit Landlord.*] Gentlemen, as they may'nt be good enough company for you, step down for a moment, and I'll be with you in the squeezing of a lemon.

[*Exeunt Mob.*

Father-in-law has been calling me whelp, and hound, this half year. Now, if I pleased, I could be so revenged upon the old grumbletonian! But, then, I'm afraid—afraid of what! I shall soon be worth fifteen hundred a-year, and let him frighten me out of that, if he can.

*Enter* LANDLORD, *conducting* MARLOW *and* HASTINGS.

*Mar.* What a tedious uncomfortable day have we had of it! We were told it was but forty miles across the country, and we have come above threescore.

*Hast.* And all, Marlow, from that unaccountable reserve of yours, that would not let us inquire more frequently on the way.

*Mar.* I own, Hastings, I am unwilling to lay myself under an obligation to every one I meet; and often stand the chance of an unmannerly answer.

*Hast.* At present, however, we are not likely to receive any answer.

*Tony.* No offence, gentlemen. But I'm told you have been inquiring for one Mr Hardcastle, in these parts. Do you know what part of the country you are in?

*Hast.* Not in the least, sir; but should thank you for information.

*Tony.* Nor the way you came?

*Hast.* No, sir; but if you can inform us——

*Tony.* Why, gentlemen, if you know neither the road you are going, nor where you are, nor

the road you came, the first thing I have to inform you is, that—You have lost your way.

*Mar.* We wanted no ghost to tell us that!

*Tony.* Pray, gentlemen, may I be so bold as to ask the place from whence you came?

*Mar.* That's not necessary towards directing us where we are to go.

*Tony.* No offence: but question for question is all fair, you know. Pray, gentlemen, is not this same Hardcastle a cross-grained, old fashioned, whimsical fellow, with an ugly face, a daughter, and a pretty son?

*Hast.* We have not seen the gentleman, but he has the family you mention.

*Tony.* The daughter, a tall trapesing, trollopping, talkative maypole———The son, a pretty, well-bred, agreeable youth, that every body is fond of.

*Mar.* Our information differs in this. The daughter is said to be well-bred and beautiful; the son, an awkward booby, reared up, and spoiled at his mother's apron-string.

*Tony.* He-he-hem——Then, gentlemen, all I have to tell you is, that you won't reach Mr Hardcastle's house this night, I believe.

*Hast.* Unfortunate!

*Tony.* It's a damned long, dark, boggy, dirty, dangerous way. Stingo, tell the gentlemen the way to Mr Hardcastle's;—[*Winking upon the landlord.*] Mr Hardcastle's, of Quagmire Marsh; you understand me?

*Land.* Master Hardcastle's! Lock-a-daisy, my masters, you're come a deadly deal wrong! When you came to the bottom of the hill, you should have crossed down Squash-lane.

*Mar.* Cross down Squash-lane!

*Land.* Then you were to keep straight forward, 'till you came to four roads.

*Mar.* Come to where four roads meet!

*Tony.* Ay; but you must be sure to take only one of them.

*Mar.* O sir, you're facetious.

*Tony.* Then keeping to the right, you are to go sideways till you come upon Crack-skull common: there you must look sharp for the track of the wheel, and go forward, till you come to farmer Murrain's barn. Coming to the farmer's barn, you are to turn to the right, and then to the left, and then to the right about again, till you find out the old mill———

*Mar.* Zounds, man! we could as soon find out the longitude!

*Hast.* What's to be done, Marlow?

*Mar.* This house promises but a poor reception; though, perhaps, the landlord can accommodate us.

*Land.* Alack, master, we have but one spare bed in the whole house.

*Tony.* And, to my knowledge, that's taken up by three lodgers already. [*After a pause, in which the rest seem disconcerted.*] I have hit it. Don't you think, Stingo, our landlady could accommodate the gentlemen by the fireside, with——three chairs and a bolster?

*Hast.* I hate sleeping by the fireside.

*Mar.* And I detest your three chairs and a bolster.

*Tony.* You do, do you?—then let me see—what—if you go on a mile further, to the Buck's Head; the old Buck's Head on the hill, one of the best inns in the whole country?

*Hast.* O ho! so we have escaped an adventure for this night, however.

*Land.* [*Apart to Tony.*] Sure, you be'nt sending them to your father's as an inn, be you?

*Tony.* Mum, you fool you! Let them find that out. [*To them.*] You have only to keep on streight forward, till you come to a large old house by the road side. You'll see a pair of large horns over the door. That's the sign. Drive up the yard, and call stoutly about you.

*Hast.* Sir, we are obliged to you. The servants can't miss the way?

*Tony.* No, no: But I tell you, though, the landlord is rich, and going to leave off business; so he wants to be thought a gentleman, saving your presence, he, he, he! He'll be for giving you his company, and, ecod, if you mind him, he'll persuade you that his mother was an alderman, and his aunt a justice of peace!

*Land.* A troublesome old blade, to be sure; but a keeps as good wines and beds as any in the whole country.

*Mar.* Well, if he supplies us with these, we shall want no further connexion. We are to turn to the right, did you say?

*Tony.* No, no; straight forward. I'll just step myself, and shew you a piece of the way. [*To the landlord.*] Mum!

*Land.* Ah, bless your heart, for a sweet, pleasant—damned mischievous son of a whore!

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An old fashioned house.*

*Enter* HARDCASTLE, *followed by three or four awkward servants.*

*Hard.* WELL, I hope you're perfect in the table exercise I have been teaching you these three days. You all know your posts and your places, and can shew that you have been used to good company, without stirring from home.

*Omnes.* Ay, ay!

*Hard.* When company comes, you are not to pop out and stare, and then run in again, like frighted rabbits in a warren.

*Omnes.* No, no.

*Hard.* You, Diggory, whom I have taken from the barn, are to make a shew at the side table; and you, Roger, whom I have advanced from the plough, are to place yourself behind my chair. But you're not to stand so, with your hands in your pockets. Take your hands from your pockets, Roger; and from your head, you blockhead you! They're a little too stiff, indeed; but that's no great matter.

*Dig.* Ay, mind how I hold them! I learned to hold my hands this way, when I was upon drill for the militia. And so being upon drill—

*Hard.* You must not be so talkative, Diggory. You must be all attention to the guests. You must hear us talk, and not think of talking; you must see us drink, and not think of drinking; you must see us eat, and not think of eating!

*Dig.* By the laws, your worship, that's parfectly unpossible. Whenever Diggory sees yeating going forwards, ecod, he's always for wishing for a mouthful himself!

*Hard.* Blockhead! is not a belly-full in the kitchen as good as a belly-full in the parlour? stay your stomach with that reflection!

*Dig.* Ecod, I thank your worship; I'll make a shift to stay my stomach with a slice of cold beef in the pantry!

*Hard.* Diggory, you are too talkative. Then, if I happen to say a good thing, or tell a good story at table, you must not all burst out a laughing, as if you made part of the company.

*Dig.* Then, ecod, your worship must not tell the story of Ould Grouse in the gun-room: I can't help laughing at that—he, he, he!—for the soul of me! We have laughed at that these twenty years—ha, ha, ha!

*Hard.* Ha, ha, ha! The story is a good one. Well, honest Diggory, you may laugh at that—but still remember to be attentive. Suppose one of the company should call for a glass of wine, how will you behave? A glass of wine, sir, if you please. [*To Diggory.*]—Eh, why don't you move?

*Dig.* Ecod, your worship, I never have courage till I see the eatables and drinkables brought upo' the table, and then I'm as bauld as a lion.

*Hard.* What! will no body move?

1*st Ser.* I'm not to leave this place.

2*d Ser.* I'm sure its no pleace of mine.

3*d Ser.* Nor mine, for sartain.

*Dig.* Wauns, and I'm sure it canna be mine.

*Hard.* You numskulls! and so, while, like your betters, you are quarrelling for places, the guests must be starved? O you dunces! I find I must begin all over again.——But don't I hear a coach drive into the yard? To your posts, you blockheads! I'll go, in the mean time, and give my old friend's son a hearty welcome at the gate.

[*Exit* HARDCASTLE.

*Dig.* By the elevens, my place is gone quite out of my head!

*Roger.* I know that my place is to be every where.

1*st Ser.* Where the devil is mine?

2*d Ser.* My pleace is to be no where at all; and so Ize go about my business.

[*Exeunt Servants, running about as if frighted, different ways.*

*Enter Servant with candles, shewing in* MARLOW *and* HASTINGS.

*Ser.* Welcome, gentlemen, very welcome! This way.

*Hast.* After the disappointments of the day, welcome once more, Charles, to the comforts of a clean room and a good fire. Upon my word, a very well looking house! antique, but creditable.

*Mar.* The usual fate of a large mansion. Having first ruined the master by good housekeeping, it at last comes to levy contributions as an inn.

*Hast.* As you say, we passengers are to be taxed to pay all these fineries. I have often seen a good sideboard, or a marble chimney-piece, though not actually put in the bill, enflame the reckoning confoundedly.

*Mar.* Travellers, George, must pay in all places. The only difference is, that in good inns, you pay dearly for luxuries; in bad inns, you are fleeced and starved.

*Hast.* You have lived pretty much among them. In truth, I have been often surprised, that you, who have seen so much of the world, with your natural good sense, and your many opportunities, could never yet acquire a requisite share of assurance.

*Mar.* The Englishman's malady. But tell me, George, where could I have learned that assurance you talk of? My life has been chiefly spent in a college, or an inn, in seclusion from that lovely part of the creation that chiefly teach men confidence. I don't know that I was ever familiarly acquainted with a single modest woman—

except my mother—But, among females of another class, you know—

*Hast.* Ay; among them you are impudent enough of all conscience.

*Mar.* They are of us, you know.

*Hast.* But, in the company of women of reputation I never saw such an idiot, such a trembler; you look for all the world as if you wanted an opportunity of stealing out of the room.

*Mar.* Why, man, that's because I do want to steal out of the room. Faith, I have often formed a resolution to break the ice, and rattle away at any rate. But, I don't know how, a single glance from a pair of fine eyes has totally overset my resolution. An impudent fellow may counterfeit modesty, but I'll be hanged if a modest man can ever conterfeit impudence.

*Hast.* If you could but say half the fine things to them that I have heard you lavish upon the bar-maid of an inn, or even a college bed-maker—

*Mar.* Why, George, I can't say fine things to them. They freeze, they petrify me. They may talk of a comet, or a burning mountain, or some such bagatelle. But, to me, a modest woman, drest out in all her finery, is the most tremendous object of the whole creation!

*Hast.* Ha, ha, ha! At this rate, man, how can you ever expect to marry?

*Mar.* Never, unless, as among kings and princes, my bride were to be courted by proxy. If, indeed, like an eastern bridegroom, one were to be introduced to a wife he never saw before, it might be endured. But to go through all the terrors of a formal courtship, together with the episode of aunts, grand-mothers and cousins, and at last to blurt out the broad staring-question, of, madam, will you marry me? No, no; that's a strain much above me, I assure you.

*Hast.* I pity you. But how do you intend behaving to the lady you are come down to visit at the request of your father?

*Mar.* As I behave to all other ladies. Bow very low. Answer yes, or no, to all her demands—But, for the rest, I don't think I shall venture to look in her face, till I see my father's again.

*Hast.* I'm surprised, that one, who is so warm a friend, can be so cool a lover.

*Mar.* To be explicit, my dear Hastings, my chief inducement down was to be instrumental in forwarding your happiness, not my own. Miss Neville loves you; the family don't know you; as my friend, you are sure of a reception, and let honour do the rest,

*Hast.* My dear Marlow! But I'll suppress the emotion. Were I a wretch, meanly seeking to carry off a fortune, you should be the last man in the world I would apply to for assistance. But Miss Neville's person is all I ask, and that is mine, both from her deceased father's consent, and her own inclination.

*Mar.* Happy man! You have talents and art to captivate any woman. I'm doomed to adore the sex, and yet to converse with the only part of it I despise. This stammer in my address, and this awkward prepossessing visage of mine, can never permit me to soar above the reach of a milliner's 'prentice, or one of the dutchesses of Drury-lane. Pshaw! this fellow here to interrupt us.

*Enter* HARDCASTLE.

*Hard.* Gentlemen, once more you are heartily welcome. Which is Mr Marlow? Sir, you're heartily welcome. It's not my way, you see, to receive my friends with my back to the fire. I like to give them a hearty reception, in the old style, at my gate. I like to see their horses and trunks taken care of.

*Mar.* [*Aside.*] He has got our names from the servants already.—[*To him.*] We approve your caution and hospitality, sir.—[*To* HASTINGS.] I have been thinking, George, of changing our travelling dresses in the morning; I am grown confoundedly ashamed of mine.

*Hard.* I beg, Mr Marlow, you'll use no ceremony in this house.

*Hast.* I fancy, George, you're right: the first blow is half the battle. I intend opening the campaign with the white and gold.

*Hard.* Mr Marlow—Mr Hastings—gentlemen—pray be under no restraint in this house. This is Liberty-hall, gentlemen. You may do just as you please here.

*Mar.* Yet, George, if we open the campaign too fiercely at first, we may want ammunition before it is over. I think to reserve the embroidery to secure a retreat.

*Hard.* Your talking of a retreat, Mr Marlow, puts me in mind of the duke of Marlborough, when he went to besiege Denain. He first summoned the garrison—

*Mar.* Don't you think the *ventre dor* waistcoat will do with the plain brown?

*Hard.* He first summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men——

*Hast.* I think not: Brown and yellow mix but very poorly.

*Hard.* I say, gentlemen, as I was telling you, he summoned the garrison, which might consist of about five thousand men—

*Mar.* The girls like finery.

*Hard.* Which might consist of about five thousand men, well appointed with stores, ammunition, and other implements of war. Now, says the duke of Marlborough to George Brooks, that stood next to him——You must have heard of George Brooks?—I'll pawn my dukedom, says he, but I take that garrison without spilling a drop of blood. So——

*Mar.* What, my good friend, if you give us a glass of punch in the mean time? it would help us to carry on the siege with vigour.

*Hard.* Punch, sir! [*Aside.*] This is the most unaccountable kind of modesty I ever met with!

*Mar.* Yes, sir, punch. A glass of warm punch, after our journey, will be comfortable. This is Liberty-hall, you know.

*Hard.* Here's cup, sir.

*Mar.* [*Aside.*] So this fellow, in his Liberty-hall, will only let us have just what he pleases.

*Hard.* [*Taking the cup.*] I hope you'll find it to your mind. I have prepared it with my own hands, and I believe you'll own the ingredients are tolerable. Will you be so good as to pledge me, sir? Here, Mr Marlow, here is to our better acquaintance! [*Drinks.*

*Mar.* [*Aside.*] A very impudent fellow this! but he's a character, and I'll humour him a little. Sir, my service to you. [*Drinks.*

*Hast.* [*Aside.*] I see this fellow wants to give us his company, and forgets that he's an innkeeper, before he has learned to be a gentleman.

*Mar.* From the excellence of your cup, my old friend, I suppose you have a good deal of business in this part of the country? Warm work, now and then, at elections, I suppose?

*Hard.* No, sir, I have long given that work over. Since our betters have hit upon the expedient of electing each other, there's no business for us that sell ale.

*Hast.* So, then, you have no turn for politics, I find?

*Hard.* Not in the least. There was a time, indeed, I fretted myself about the mistakes of government, like other people; but finding myself every day grow more angry, and the government growing no better, I left it to mend itself. Since that, I no more trouble my head about Heyder Alley, or Ally Cawn, than about Ally Croaker. Sir, my service to you. [*Drinks.*

*Hast.* So that, with eating above stairs, and drinking below, with receiving your friends within, and amusing them without, you lead a good pleasant bustling life of it.

*Hard.* I do stir about a good deal, that's certain. Half the differences of the parish are adjusted in this very parlour.

*Mar.* [*After drinking.*] And you have an argument in your cup, old gentleman, better than any in Westminster-hall.

*Hard.* Ay, young gentleman, that, and a little philosophy.

*Mar.* [*Aside.*] Well, this is the first time I ever heard of an innkeeper's philosophy.

*Hast.* So then, like an experienced general, you attack them on every quarter. If you find their reason manageable, you attack it with your philosophy; if you find they have no reason, you attack them with this. Here's your health, my philosopher! [*Drinks.*

*Hard.* Good, very good, thank you; ha, ha! Your generalship puts me in mind of Prince Eugene, when he fought the Turks at the battle of Belgrade. You shall hear.

*Mar.* Instead of the battle of Belgrade, I think it's almost time to talk about supper. What has your philosophy got in the house for supper?

*Hard.* For supper, sir!—[*Aside.*] Was ever such a request to a man in his own house!

*Mar.* Yes, sir, supper, sir; I begin to feel an appetite. I shall make devilish work to-night in the larder, I promise you.

*Hard.* [*Aside.*] Such a brazen dog sure never my eyes beheld!—[*To him.*] Why, really, sir, as for supper, I can't well tell. My Dorothy and the cook-maid settle these things between them. I leave these kind of things entirely to them.

*Mar.* You do, do you?

*Hard.* Entirely. By the by, I believe they are in actual consultation upon what's for supper this moment in the kitchen.

*Mar.* Then I beg they'll admit me as one of their privy council. It's a way I have got. When I travel, I always chuse to regulate my own supper. Let the cook be called. No offence, I hope, sir?

*Hard.* O no, sir; none in the least; yet I don't know how, our Bridget, the cook-maid, is not very communicative upon these occasions. Should we send for her, she might scold us all out of the house.

*Hast.* Let's see the list of the larder, then. I ask it as a favour. I always match my appetite to my bill of fare.

*Mar.* [*To* HARDCASTLE, *who looks at them with surprise.*] Sir, he's very right, and it's my way, too.

*Hard.* Sir, you have a right to command here. Here, Roger, bring us the bill of fare for to-night's supper. I believe it's drawn out. Your manner, Mr Hastings, puts me in mind of my uncle, colonel Wallop. It was a saying of his, that no man was sure of his supper till he had eaten it.

*Hast.* [*Aside.*] All upon the high ropes! His uncle a colonel! we shall soon hear of his mother being a justice of peace. But let's hear the bill of fare.

*Mar.* [*Perusing.*] What's here? For the first course; for the second course; for the dessert. The devil, sir! do you think we have brought down the whole joiners' company, or the corporation of Bedford, to eat up such a supper? Two or three little things, clean and comfortable, will do.

*Hast.* But, let's hear it.

*Mar.* [*Reading.*] For the first course at the top, a pig and pruin sauce.

*Hast.* Damn your pig, I say!

*Mar.* And damn your pruin sauce, say I!

*Hard.* And yet, gentlemen, to men that are hungry, pig, with pruin sauce, is very good eating.

*Mar.* At the bottom, a calve's tongue and brains.

*Hast.* Let your brains be knocked out, my good sir; I don't like them.

*Mar.* Or you may clap them on a plate by themselves. I do.

*Hard.* [*Aside.*] Their impudence confounds me!—[*To them.*] Gentlemen, you are my guests; make what alterations you please. Is there any thing else you wish to retrench or alter, gentlemen?

*Mar.* Item, a pork pie, a boiled rabbit and sausages, a florentine, a shaking pudding, and a dish of tiff—taff—taffety cream!

*Hast.* Confound your made dishes! I shall be as much at a loss in this house as at a green and yellow dinner at the French ambassador's table. I'm for plain eating.

*Hard.* I'm sorry, gentlemen, that I have nothing you like; but if there be any thing you have a particular fancy to——

*Mar.* Why, really, sir, your bill of fare is so exquisite, that any one part of it is full as good as another. Send us what you please. So much for supper. And now to see that our beds are aired, and properly taken care of.

*Hard.* I entreat you'll leave all that to me. You shall not stir a step.

*Mar.* Leave that to you! I protest, sir, you must excuse me; I always look to these things myself.

*Hard.* I must insist, sir, you'll make yourself easy on that head.

*Mar.* You see I'm resolved on it.—[*Aside.*] A very troublesome fellow this, as ever I met with.

*Hard.* Well, sir, I'm resolved, at least, to attend you.—[*Aside.*] This may be modern modesty, but I never saw any thing look so like old-fashioned impudence.

[*Exeunt* MARLOW *and* HARDCASTLE.

*Hast.* So I find this fellow's civilities begin to grow troublesome. But who can be angry at those assiduities which are meant to please him? Ha! what do I see? Miss Neville, by all that's happy!

*Enter* MISS NEVILLE.

*Miss Nev.* My dear Hastings! To what unexpected good fortune, to what accident, am I to ascribe this happy meeting?

*Hast.* Rather let me ask the same question, as I could never have hoped to meet my dearest Constance at an inn.

*Miss Nev.* An inn! sure you mistake! my aunt, my guardian, lives here. What could induce you to think this house an inn?

*Hast.* My friend, Mr Marlow, with whom I came down, and I, have been sent here, as to an inn, I assure you. A young fellow, whom we accidentally met at a house hard by, directed us hither.

*Miss Nev.* Certainly it must be one of my hopeful cousin's tricks, of whom you have heard me talk so often; ha, ha, ha, ha!

*Hast.* He whom your aunt intends for you? He, of whom I have such just apprehensions?

*Miss Nev.* You have nothing to fear from him, I assure you. You'd adore him, if you knew how heartily he despises me. My aunt knows it too, and has undertaken to court me for him, and actually begins to think she has made a conquest.

*Hast.* Thou dear dissembler! You must know, my Constance, I have just seized this happy opportunity of my friend's visit here, to get admittance into the family. The horses that carried us down are now fatigued with the journey, but they'll soon be refreshed; and then, if my dearest girl will trust in her faithful Hastings, we shall soon be landed in France, where, even among slaves, the laws of marriage are respected.

*Miss Nev.* I have often told you, that, though ready to obey you, I yet should leave my little fortune behind with reluctance. The greatest part of it was left me by my uncle, the India director, and chiefly consists in jewels. I have been for some time persuading my aunt to let me wear them. I fancy I'm very near succeeding. The instant they are put into my possession you shall find me ready to make them and myself yours.

*Hast.* Perish the baubles! Your person is all I desire. In the mean time, my friend Marlow must not be let into his mistake. I know the strange reserve of his temper is such, that, if abruptly informed of it, he would instantly quit the house before our plan was ripe for execution.

*Miss Nev.* But how shall we keep him in the deception! Miss Hardcastle is just returned from walking; what if we still continue to deceive him?———This, this way———

[*They confer.*

*Enter* MARLOW.

*Mar.* The assiduities of these good people tease me beyond bearing! My host seems to think it ill manners to leave me alone, and so he claps not only himself, but his old-fashioned wife on my back. They talk of coming to sup with us, too; and then, I suppose, we are to run the gauntlet through all the rest of the family—What have we got here?

*Hast.* My dear Charles! Let me congratulate you—The most fortunate accident!—Who do you think is just alighted?

*Mar.* Cannot guess.

*Hast.* Our mistresses, boy; Miss Hardcastle, and Miss Neville! Give me leave to introduce Miss Constance Neville to your acquaintance. Happening to dine in the neighbourhood, they called, on their return, to take fresh horses here.—— Miss Hardcastle has just stepped into the next

room, and will be back in an instant. Wasn't it lucky? eh?

*Mar.* [*Aside.*] I have just been mortified enough of all conscience, and here comes something to complete my embarrassment.

*Hast.* Well! but was not it the most fortunate thing in the world?

*Mar.* Oh! yes. Very fortunate—a most joyful encounter!———But our dresses, George, you know, are in disorder———What if we should postpone the happiness till to-morrow?—To-morrow, at her own house——It will be every bit as convenient———And rather more respectful———To-morrow let it be. [*Offering to go.*

*Miss Nev.* By no means, sir! Your ceremony will displease her. The disorder of your dress will shew the ardour of your impatience.—Besides, she knows you are in the house, and will permit you to see her.

*Mar.* O! the devil! How shall I support it? Hem! hem! Hastings, you must not go. You are to assist me, you know. I shall be confoundedly ridiculous. Yet, hang it! I'll take courage. Hem!

*Hast.* Pshaw, man! it's but the first plunge, and all is over. She's but a woman, you know.

*Mar.* And of all women, she that I dread most to encounter!

*Enter* MISS HARDCASTLE *as returning from walking, a bonnet, &c.*

*Hast.* [*Introducing them.*] Miss Hardcastle, Mr Marlow. I am proud of bringing two persons of such merit together, that only want to know, to esteem each other.

*Miss Hard.* [*Aside.*] Now, for meeting my modest gentleman with a demure face, and quite in his own manner. [*After a pause, in which he appears very uneasy and disconcerted.*] I am glad of your safe arrival, sir———I am told you had some accidents by the way.

*Mar.* Only a few, madam. Yes, we had some. Yes, madam, a good many accidents, but should be sorry—madam—or rather glad of any accidents—that are so agreeably concluded.——Hem!

*Hast.* [*To him.*] You never spoke better in your whole life. Keep it up, and I'll insure you the victory.

*Miss Hard.* I'm afraid you flatter, sir. You, that have seen so much of the finest company, can find little entertainment in an obscure corner of the country.

*Mar.* [*Gathering courage.*] I have lived, indeed, in the world, madam; but I have kept very little company. I have been but an observer upon life, madam, while others were enjoying it.

*Miss Nev.* But that, I am told, is the way to enjoy it at last.

*Hast.* [*To him.*] Cicero never spoke better.—Once more, and you are confirmed in assurance for ever.

*Mar.* [*To him.*] Hem! Stand by me, then, and when I'm down, throw in a word or two to set me up again.

*Miss Hard.* An observer, like you, upon life, were, I fear, disagreeably employed, since you must have had much more to censure, than to approve.

*Mar.* Pardon me, madam! I was always willing to be amused. The folly of most people is rather an object of mirth than uneasiness.

*Hast.* [*To him.*] Bravo, Bravo! Never spoke so well in your whole life. Well, Miss Hardcastle, I see that you and Mr Marlow are going to be very good company. I believe our being here will but embarrass the interview.

*Mar.* Not in the least, Mr Hastings. We like your company of all things. [*To him.*] Zounds! George, sure you won't go! How can you leave us?

*Hast.* Our presence will but spoil conversation; so we'll retire to the next room. [*To him.*] You don't consider, man, that we are to manage a little tete-a-tete of our own. [*Exeunt.*

*Miss Hard.* [*After a pause.*] But you have not been wholly an observer, I presume, sir? The ladies, I should hope, have employed some part of your addresses.

*Mar.* [*Relapsing into timidity.*] Pardon me, madam, I—I—I—as yet have studied—only—to—deserve them.

*Miss Hard.* And that, some say, is the very worst way to obtain them.

*Mar.* Perhaps so, madam. But I love to converse only with the more grave and sensible part of the sex——But I'm afraid I grow tiresome.

*Miss Hard.* Not at all, sir; there is nothing I like so much as grave conversation myself; I could hear it for ever. Indeed, I have often been surprised how a man of sentiment could ever admire those light airy pleasures, where nothing reaches the heart.

*Mar.* It's——a disease————of the mind, madam. In the variety of tastes, there must be some who, wanting a relish——for————um—a—um.

*Miss Hard.* I understand you, sir. There must be some who, wanting a relish for refined pleasures, pretend to despise what they are incapable of tasting,

*Mar.* My meaning, madam; but infinitely better expressed. And I can't help observing——a————

*Miss Hard.* [*Aside.*] Who could ever suppose this fellow impudent upon some occasions? [*To him*] You were going to observe, sir———

*Mar.* I was observing, madam———I protest, madam, I forget what I was going to observe.

*Miss Hard.* [*Aside.*] I vow, and so do I. [*To*

*him.*] You were observing, sir, that in this age of hypocrisy—something about hypocrisy, sir.

*Mar.* Yes, madam. In this age of hypocrisy, there are few, who, upon strict enquiry, do not—a—a—a———

*Miss Hard.* I understand you perfectly, sir.

*Mar.* [*Aside.*] Egad! and that's more than I do myself.

*Miss Hard.* You mean, that in this hypocritical age, there are few that do not condemn in public what they use in private, and think they pay every debt to virtue when they praise it.

*Mar.* True, madam; those who have most virtue in their mouths, have least of it in their bosoms. But I'm sure I tire you, madam.

*Miss Hard.* Not in the least, sir; there is something so agreeable and spirited in your manner, such life and force—Pray, sir, go on.

*Mar.* Yes, madam. I was saying———that there are some occasions——when a total want of courage, madam, destroys all the———and puts us——upon a———a———a———

*Miss Hard.* I agree with you entirely. A want of courage, upon some occasions, assumes the appearance of ignorance, and betrays us when we most wish to excel. I beg you'll proceed.

*Mar.* Yes, madam. Morally speaking, madam———But I see Miss Neville expecting us in the next room. I would not intrude for the world.

*Miss Hard.* I protest, sir, I never was more agreeably entertained in all my life. Pray, go on.

*Mar.* Yes, madam. I was—But she beckons us to join her. Madam, shall I do myself the honour to attend you?

*Miss Hard.* Well, then, I'll follow.

*Mar.* [*Aside.*] This pretty smooth dialogue has done for me. [*Exit.*

*Miss Hard.* Ha! ha! ha! Was there ever such a sober sentimental interview? I am certain he scarce looked in my face the whole time. Yet the fellow, but for his unaccountable bashfulness, is pretty well, too. He has good sense, but then so buried in his fears, that it fatigues one more than ignorance. If I could teach him a little confidence, it would be doing somebody that I know of a piece of service. But who is that somebody? that, faith, is a question I can scarce answer. [*Exit.*

*Enter* TONY *and* MISS NEVILLE, *followed by* MISS HARDCASTLE *and* HASTINGS.

*Tony.* What do you follow me for, cousin Con? I wonder you're not ashamed to be so very engaging.

*Miss Nev.* I hope, cousin, one may speak to one's own relations, and not be to blame.

*Tony.* Ay, but I know what sort of a relation you want to make me though; but it won't do. I tell you, cousin Con, it won't do; so I beg you'll keep your distance; I want no nearer relationship.

[*She follows, coquetting him to the back scene.*]

*Mrs Hard.* Well! I vow, Mr Hastings, you are very entertaining. There's nothing in the world I love to talk of so much as London, and the fashions, though I was never there myself.

*Hast.* Never there! You amaze me! From your air and manner, I concluded you had been bred all your life either at Ranelagh, St James's, or Tower Wharf.

*Mrs Hard.* O, sir! you're only pleased to say so. We country persons can have no manner at all. I'm in love with the town, and that serves to raise me above some of our neighbouring rustics: but who can have a manner that has never seen the Pantheon, the Grotto Gardens, the Borough, and such places where the nobility chiefly resort? All I can do, is to enjoy London at second-hand. I take care to know every tete-a-tete from the Scandalous Magazine, and have all the fashions, as they come out, in a letter from the two Miss Rickets of Crooked-lane. Pray, how do you like this head, Mr Hastings?

*Hast.* Extremely elegant and degagée, upon my word, madam! Your friseur is a Frenchman, I suppose?

*Mrs Hard.* I protest I dressed it myself from a print in the ladies' memorandum book for the last year.

*Hast.* Indeed! Such a head in a side box, at the play-house, would draw as many gazers as my lady Mayoress at a city-ball.

*Mrs Hard.* I vow, since inoculation began, there is no such thing to be seen as a plain woman; so one must dress a little particular, or one may escape in the crowd.

*Hast.* But that can never be your case, madam, in any dress. [*Bowing.*

*Mrs Hard.* Yet, what signifies my dressing, when I have such a piece of antiquity by my side as Mr Hardcastle? all I can say will not argue down a single button from his clothes. I have often wanted him to throw off his great flaxen wig, and where he was bauld, to plaster it over, like my lord Pately, with powder.

*Hast.* You are right, madam; for, as among the ladies, there are none ugly, so, among the men, there are none old.

*Mrs Hard.* But what do you think his answer was? Why, with his usual Gothic vivacity, he said I only wanted to throw off his wig to convert it into a tete for my own wearing.

*Hast.* Intolerable! At your age, you may wear what you please, and it must become you.

*Mrs Hard.* Pray, Mr Hastings, what do you take to be the most fashionable age about town?

*Hast.* Some time ago, forty was all the mode; but I am told the ladies intend to bring up fifty for the ensuing winter.

*Mrs Hard.* Seriously? Then, I shall be too young for the fashion.

*Hast.* No lady begins now to put on jewels till she is past forty. For instance, Miss, there, in a polite circle, would be considered as a child, a mere maker of samplers.

*Mrs Hard.* And yet Mrs Niece thinks herself as much a woman, and is as fond of jewels, as the oldest of us all.

*Hast.* Your niece is she? And that young gentleman, a brother of yours, I should presume?

*Mrs Hard.* My son, sir! They are contracted to each other. Observe their little sports. They fall in and out ten times a day, as if they were man and wife already. [*To them.*] Well, Tony, child, what soft things are you saying to your cousin Constance this evening?

*Tony.* I have been saying no soft things; but that it's very hard to be followed about so.—— Ecod! I've not a place in the house now, that is left to myself, but the stable.

*Mrs Hard.* Never mind him, Con, my dear.— He's in another story behind your back.

*Miss Nev.* There's something generous in my cousin's manner. He falls out before faces to be forgiven in private.

*Tony.* That's a damned confounded——— crack.

*Mrs Hard.* Ah, he's a sly one! Don't you think they're like each other about the mouth, Mr Hastings? The Blenkinsop mouth, to a T.— They are of a size, too. Back to back, my pretties, that Mr Hastings may see you. Come, Tony.

*Tony.* You had as good not make me, I tell you. [*Measuring.*

*Miss Nev.* O, lud! he has almost cracked my head.

*Mrs Hard.* O, the monster! For shame, Tony! You a man, and behave so!

*Tony.* If I am a man, let me have my fortin. Ecod! I'll not be made a fool of no longer.

*Mrs Hard.* Is this, ungrateful boy, all that I am to get for the pains I have taken in your education? I, that have rocked you in your cradle, and fed that pretty mouth with a spoon! Did not I work that waistcoat to make you genteel? Did not I prescribe for you every day, and weep while the receipt was operating?

*Tony.* Ecod! you had reason to weep, for you have been dozing me ever since I was born. I have gone through every recipe in the Complete Huswife ten times over; and you have thoughts of coursing me through Quincy next spring.—— But, ecod! I tell you, I'll not be made a fool of no longer.

*Mrs Hard.* Was not it all for your good, viper? Was not it all for your good?

*Tony.* I wish you would let me and my good alone, then. Snubbing this way when I am in spirits! If I am to have any good, let it come of itself; not to keep dinging it, dinging it into one so!

*Mrs Hard.* That's false; I never see you when you are in spirits. No, Tony, you then go to the ale-house or kennel. I am never to be delighted with your agreeable, wild notes, unfeeling monster!

*Tony.* Ecod! mamma, your own notes are the wildest of the two.

*Miss Hard.* Was ever the like? But I see he wants to break my heart; I see he does.

*Hast.* Dear madam, permit me to lecture the young gentleman a little. I am certain I can persuade him to his duty.

*Mrs Hard.* Well! I must retire.——Come, Constance, my love. You see, Mr Hastings, the wretchedness of my situation! Was ever poor woman so plagued with a dear, sweet, pretty, provoking, undutiful boy.

[*Exeunt* MRS HARDCASTLE *and* MISS NEVILLE.

*Tony.* [*Singing.*]

*There was a young man riding by,*
*And fain would have his will.*
*Rang do didlo dee.*

Don't mind her. Let her cry. It's the comfort of her heart. I have seen her and sister cry over a book for an hour together; and they said they liked the book the better the more it made them cry.

*Hast.* Then, you're no friend to the ladies, I find, my pretty young gentleman?

*Tony.* That's as I find 'um.

*Hast.* Not to her of your mother's choosing, I dare answer? And yet she appears to me a pretty well-tempered girl.

*Tony.* That is because you don't know her as well as I. Ecod! I know every inch about her; and there's not a more bitter cantanckerous toad in all Christendom.

*Hast.* [*Aside.*] Pretty encouragement this for a lover!

*Tony.* I have seen her since the height of that! She has as many tricks as a hare in a thicket, or a colt the first day's breaking.

*Hast.* To me she appears sensible and silent.

*Tony.* Ay, before company. But when she's with her play-mates, she's as loud as a hog in a gate.

*Hast.* But there is a meek modesty about her that charms me.

*Tony.* Yes, but curb her never so little, she kicks up, and you're flung in a ditch.

*Hast.* Well, but you must allow her a little beauty—Yes, you must allow her some beauty.

*Tony.* Bandbox! She's all a made up thing, mun. Ah! could you but see Bet Bouncer of these parts, you might then talk of beauty. Ecod, she has two eyes as black as sloes, and cheeks as broad and red as a pulpit cushion! She'd make two of she.

*Hast.* Well, what say you to a friend that would take this bitter bargain off your hands?

*Tony.* Anan?

*Hast.* Would you thank him that would take Miss Neville, and leave you to happiness and your dear Betsy?

*Tony.* Ay; but where is there such a friend, for who would take her?

*Hast.* I am he. If you but assist me, I'll engage to whip her off to France, and you shall never hear more of her.

*Tony.* Assist you! Ecod I will, to the last drop of my blood. I'll clap a pair of horses to your chaise that shall trundle you off in a twinkling, and may be get you a part of her fortin beside, in jewels, that you little dream of.

*Hast.* My dear 'squire, this looks like a lad of spirit.

*Tony.* Come along, then, and you shall see more of my spirit before you have done with me. [*Singing.*

*We are the boys*
*That fears no noise,*
*Where the thundering cannons roar!*

[*Exeunt.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.

*Enter* HARDCASTLE.

*Hard.* WHAT could my old friend, sir Charles, mean, by recommending his son as the modestest young man in town? To me he appears the most impudent piece of brass, that ever spoke with a tongue. He has taken possession of the easy chair by the fire-side already. He took off his boots in the parlour, and desired me to see them taken care of. I'm desirous to know how his impudence affects my daughter—She will certainly be shocked at it.

*Enter* MISS HARDCASTLE, *plainly dressed.*

Well, my Kate, I see you have changed your dress as I bid you; and yet, I believe, there was no great occasion.

*Miss Hard.* I find such a pleasure, sir, in obeying your commands, that I take care to observe them without ever debating their propriety.

*Hard.* And yet, Kate, I sometimes give you some cause, particularly when I recommended my modest gentleman to you as a lover to-day.

*Miss Hard.* You taught me to expect something extraordinary, and I find the original exceeds the description.

*Hard.* I was never so surprised in my life! He has quite confounded all my faculties!

*Miss Hard.* I never saw any thing like it:—And a man of the world, too!

*Hard.* Ay, he learned it all abroad—what a fool was I, to think a young man could learn modesty by travelling! He might as soon learn wit at a masquerade.

*Miss Hard.* It seems all natural to him.

*Hard.* A good deal assisted by bad company, and a French dancing-master.

*Miss Hard.* Sure you mistake, papa! a French dancing-master could never have taught him that timid look—that aukward address—that bashful manner——

*Hard.* Whose look? whose manner, child

*Miss Hard.* Mr Marlow's: his mauvaise honte, his timidity struck me at the first sight.

*Hard.* Then your first sight deceived you; for I think him one of the most brazen first sights that ever astonished my senses.

*Miss Hard.* Sure, sir, you rally? I never saw any one so modest.

*Hard.* And can you be serious! I never saw such a bouncing, swaggering puppy since I was born. Bully Dawson was but a fool to him.

*Miss Hard.* Surprising! He met me with a respectful bow, a stammering voice, and a look fixed on the ground.

*Hard.* He met me with a loud voice, a lordly air, and a familiarity that made my blood freeze again!

*Miss Hard.* He treated me with diffidence and respect—censured the manners of the age—admired the prudence of girls that never laughed—tired me with apologies for being tiresome—then left the room with a bow, and, madam, I would not for the world detain you.

*Hard.* He spoke to me as if he knew me all his life before. Asked twenty questions, and never waited for an answer. Interrupted my best remarks with some silly pun, and when I was in my best story of the Duke of Marlborough and Prince Eugene, he asked if I had not a good hand at making punch. Yes, Kate, he asked your father if he was a maker of punch!

*Miss Hard.* One of us must certainly be mistaken.

*Hard.* If he be what he has shewn himself, I'm determined he shall never have my consent.

*Miss Hard.* And if he be the sullen thing I take him, he shall never have mine.

*Hard.* In one thing, then, we are agreed—to reject him.

*Miss Hard.* Yes. But upon conditions. For if you should find him less impudent, and I more presuming—if you find him more respectful, and I more importunate——I don't know——the fellow is well enough for a man—Certainly we don't meet many such at a horse race in the country.

*Hard.* If we should find him so——But that's impossible. The first appearance has done my business. I'm seldom deceived in that.

*Miss Hard.* And yet there may be many good qualities under that first appearance.

*Hard.* Ay, when a girl finds a fellow's outside to her taste, she then sets about guessing the rest of his furniture. With her, a smooth face stands for good sense, and a genteel figure for every virtue.

*Miss Hard.* I hope, sir, a conversation begun with a compliment to my good sense, won't end with a sneer at my understanding?

*Hard.* Pardon me, Kate! But if young Mr Brazen can find the art of reconciling contradictions, he may please us both, perhaps.

*Miss Hard.* And as one of us must be mistaken, what if we go to make further discoveries?

*Hard.* Agreed. But depend on't I'm in the right.

*Miss Hard.* And depend on't I'm not much in the wrong.

[*Exeunt.*

*Enter* TONY, *running in with a casket.*

*Tony.* Ecod! I have got them. Here they are. My cousin Con's necklaces, bobs and all. My mother shan't cheat the poor souls out of their fortune neither. O! my genius, is that you?

*Enter* HASTINGS.

*Hast.* My dear friend, how have you managed with your mother? I hope you have amused her with pretending love for your cousin, and that you are willing to be reconciled at last? Our horses will be refreshed in a short time, and we shall soon be ready to set off.

*Tony.* And here's something to bear your charges by the way, [*giving the casket.*] Your sweetheart's jewels. Keep them, and hang those, I say, that would rob you of one of them.

*Hast.* But how have you procured them from your mother?

*Tony.* Ask me no questions, and I'll tell you no fibs. I procured them by the rule of thumb. If I had not a key to every drawer in mother's bureau, how could I go to the alehouse so often as I do? An honest man may rob himself of his own at any time.

*Hast.* Thousands do it every day. But, to be plain with you, Miss Neville is endeavouring to procure them from her aunt this very instant. If she succeeds, it will be the most delicate way at least of obtaining them.

*Tony.* Well, keep them, till you know how it will be. But I know how it will be well enough; she'd as soon part with the only sound tooth in her head.

*Hast.* But I dread the effects of her resentment, when she finds she has lost them.

*Tony.* Never you mind her resentment; leave me to manage that. I don't value her resentment the bounce of a cracker. Zounds! here they are! Morrice! Prance!

[*Exit* HASTINGS.

*Enter* MRS HARDCASTLE, *and* MISS NEVILLE.

*Mrs Hard.* Indeed, Constance, you amaze me. Such a girl as you want jewels! It will be time enough for jewels, my dear, twenty years hence, when your beauty begins to want repairs.

*Miss Nev.* But what will repair beauty at forty, will certainly improve it at twenty, madam.

*Mrs Hard.* Yours, my dear, can admit of none. That natural blush is beyond a thousand ornaments. Besides, child, jewels are quite out at present. Don't you see half the ladies of our acquaintance, my lady Kill-day-light, and Mrs Crump, and the rest of them, carry their jewels to town, and bring nothing but paste and marcasites back?

*Miss Nev.* But who knows, madam, but somebody, that shall be nameless, would like me best with all my little finery about me?

*Mrs Hard.* Consult your glass, my dear, and then see if, with such a pair of eyes, you want any better sparklers. What do you think, Tony, my dear? does your cousin Con want any jewels, in your eyes, to set off her beauty?

*Tony.* That's as hereafter may be.

*Miss Nev.* My dear aunt, if you knew how it would oblige me.

*Mrs Hard.* A parcel of old-fashioned rose and table-cut things. They would make you look like the court of king Solomon at a puppet-show. Besides, I believe I can't readily come at them. They may be missing for aught I know to the contrary.

*Tony.* [*Apart to* MRS HARD.] Then why don't you tell her so at once, as she's so longing for them? Tell her they're lost. Its the only way to quiet her. Say they're lost, and call me to bear witness.

*Mrs Hard.* [*Apart to* TONY.] You know, my dear, I'm only keeping them for you. So if I say they're gone, you'll bear me witness, will you? He! he! he!

*Tony.* Never fear me. Ecod! I'll say I saw them taken out with my own eyes.

*Miss Nev.* I desire them but for a day, madam. Just to be permitted to shew them as relics, and then they may be locked up again.

*Mrs Hard.* To be plain with you, my dear Constance, if I could find them, you should have them. They're missing, I assure you. Lost, for aught I know; but we must have patience wherever they are.

*Miss Nev.* I'll not believe it. This is but a shallow pretence to deny me. I know they're too valuable to be so slightly kept, and as you are to answer for the loss.

*Mrs Hard.* Don't be alarmed, Constance. If they be lost, I must restore an equivalent. But my son knows they are missing, and not to be found.

*Tony.* That I can bear witness to. They are missing, and not to be found, I'll take my oath on't.

*Mrs Hard.* You must learn resignation, my dear; for, though we lose our fortune, yet we should not lose our patience. See me, how calm I am.

*Miss Nev.* Ay, people are generally calm at the misfortunes of others.

*Mrs Hard.* Now, I wonder a girl of your good sense should waste a thought upon such trumpery. We shall soon find them; and, in the mean time, you shall make use of my garnets till your jewels be found.

*Miss Nev.* I detest garnets.

*Mrs Hard.* The most becoming things in the world to set off a clear complexion. You have often seen how well they look upon me. You shall have them. [*Exit.*

*Miss Nev.* I dislike them of all things. You shan't stir—Was ever any thing so provoking, to mislay my own jewels, and force me to wear trumpery?

*Tony.* Don't be a fool. If she gives you the garnets, take what you can get. The jewels are your own already. I have stolen them out of her bureau, and she does not know it. Fly to your spark; he'll tell you more of the matter. Leave me to manage her.

*Miss Nev.* My dear cousin!

*Tony.* Vanish! She's here, and has missed them already. Zounds! how she fidgets and spits about, like a Catharine wheel!

*Enter* MRS HARDCASTLE.

*Mrs Hard.* Confusion! thieves! robbers! We are cheated, plundered, broke open, undone!

*Tony.* What's the matter, what's the matter, mamma? I hope nothing has happened to any of the good family!

*Mrs Hard.* We are robbed! My bureau has been broke open, the jewels taken out, and I'm undone!

*Tony.* Oh! is that all? Ha, ha, ha! By the laws, I never saw it better acted in my life! Ecod, I thought you was ruined in earnest, ha, ha, ha!

*Mrs Hard.* Why, boy, I am ruined in earnest. My bureau has been broke open, and all taken away.

*Tony.* Stick to that; ha, ha, ha! stick to that; I'll bear witness, you know; call me to bear witness.

*Mrs Hard.* I tell you, Tony, by all that's precious, the jewels are gone, and I shall be ruined for ever!

*Tony.* Sure I know they're gone, and I am to say so.

*Mrs Hard.* My dearest Tony, but hear me. They're gone, I say!

*Tony.* By the laws, mamma, you make me for to laugh, ha, ha! I know who took them well enough, ha, ha, ha!

*Mrs Hard.* Was there ever such a blockhead, that can't tell the difference between jest and earnest! I tell you I'm not in jest, booby.

*Tony.* That's right, that's right: You must be in a bitter passion, and then nobody will suspect either of us. I'll bear witness that they are gone.

*Mrs Hard.* Was there ever such a cross-grained brute, that won't hear me! Can you bear witness that you're no better than a fool? Was ever poor woman so beset with fools on one hand, and thieves on the other!

*Tony.* I can bear witness to that.

*Mrs Hard.* Bear witness again, you blockhead you, and I'll turn you out of the room directly! My poor niece! what will become of her? Do you laugh, you unfeeling brute, as if you enjoyed my distress?

*Tony.* I can bear witness to that.

*Mrs Hard.* Do you insult me, monster? I'll teach you to vex your mother, I will.

*Tony.* I can bear witness to that.

[*He runs off, she follows him.*

*Enter* MISS HARDCASTLE, *and Maid.*

*Miss Hard.* What an unaccountable creature is that brother of mine, to send them to the house as an inn, ha, ha! I don't wonder at his impudence.

*Maid.* But what is more, madam, the young gentleman, as you passed by in your present dress, asked me if you were the bar-maid. He mistook you for the bar-maid, madam.

*Miss Hard.* Did he? Then, as I live, I'm resolved to keep up the delusion. Tell me, Pimple, how do you like my present dress? Don't you think I look something like Cherry in the Beaux Stratagem?

*Maid.* It's the dress, madam, that every lady wears in the country, but when she visits or receives company.

*Miss Hard.* And are you sure he does not remember my face or person?

*Maid.* Certain of it.

*Miss Hard.* I vow I thought so; for though we spoke for some time together, yet his fears were such, that he never once looked up during the interview. Indeed if he had, my bonnet would have kept him from seeing me.

*Maid.* But what do you hope from keeping him in his mistake?

*Miss Hard.* In the first place, I shall be seen; and that is no small advantage to a girl, who brings her face to a market. Then I shall perhaps make an acquaintance; and that's no small victory gained over one, who never addresses any but the wildest of her sex. But my chief aim is to take my gentleman off his guard, and, like an

invisible champion of romance, examine the giant's force, before I offer to combat.

*Maid.* But are you sure you can act your part, and disguise your voice, so that he may mistake that, as he has already mistaken your person?

*Miss Hard.* Never fear me. I think I have got the true bar-cant—Did your honour call?—Attend the Lion there—Pipes and tobacco for the Angel—The Lamb has been outrageous this half hour.

*Maid.* It will do, madam. But he's here.

[*Exit Maid.*

*Enter* MARLOW.

*Mar.* What a bawling in every part of the house; I have scarce a moment's repose. If I go to the best room, there I find my host and his story. If I fly to the gallery, there we have my hostess, with her curtesy down to the ground. I have, at last, got a moment to myself, and now for recollection. [*Walks, and muses.*

*Miss Hard.* Did you call, sir? did your honour call?

*Mar.* [*Musing.*] As for Miss Hardcastle, she's too grave and sentimental for me.

*Miss Hard.* Did your honour call?

[*She still places herself before him, he turning away.*]

*Mar.* No, child—[*Musing.*] Besides, from the glimpse I had of her, I think she squints.

*Miss Hard.* I'm sure, sir, I heard the bell ring.

*Mar.* No, no.—[*Musing.*] I have pleased my father, however, by coming down, and I'll to-morrow please myself, by returning.

[*Taking out his tablets, and perusing.*

*Miss Hard.* Perhaps the other gentleman called, sir?

*Mar.* I tell you, no.

*Miss Hard.* I should be glad to know, sir. We have such a parcel of servants!

*Mar.* No, no, I tell you. [*Looks full in her face.*] Yes, child, I think I did call. I wanted—I wanted——I vow, child, you are vastly handsome.

*Miss Hard.* O la, sir, you'll make one ashamed!

*Mar.* Never saw a more sprightly malicious eye! Yes, yes, my dear; I did call. Have you got any of your——a——what d'ye call it in the house?

*Miss Hard.* No, sir, we have been out of that these ten days.

*Mar.* One may call in this house, I find, to very little purpose. Suppose I should call for a taste, just by way of trial, of the nectar of your lips; perhaps I might be disappointed in that, too.

*Miss Hard.* Nectar! nectar! that's a liquor there's no call for in these parts. French, I suppose? We keep no French wines here, sir.

*Mar.* Of true English growth, I assure you.

*Miss Hard.* Then it's odd I should not know it. We brew all sorts of wines in this house, and I have lived here these eighteen years.

*Mar.* Eighteen years! Why, one would think, child, you kept the bar before you were born. How old are you?

*Miss Hard.* O! sir, I must not tell my age. They say women and music should never be dated.

*Mar.* To guess, at this distance, you can't be much above forty. [*Approaching.*] Yet nearer I don't think so much. [*Approaching.*] By coming close to some women, they look younger still; but when we come very close indeed—[*Attempting to kiss her.*]

*Miss Hard.* Pray, sir, keep your distance. One would think you wanted to know one's age as they do horses, by mark of mouth.

*Mar.* I protest, child, you use me extremely ill. If you keep me at this distance, how is it possible you and I can be ever acquainted?

*Miss Hard.* And who wants to be acquainted with you? I want no such acquaintance, not I. I'm sure you did not treat Miss Hardcastle, that was here a while ago, in this obstropalous manner. I'll warrant me, before her, you looked dashed, and kept bowing to the ground, and talked, for all the world, as if you was before a justice of the peace.

*Mar.* [*Aside.*] Egad! she has hit, sure enough! [*To her.*] In awe of her, child? Ha, ha, ha! A mere, awkward, squinting thing! no, no. I find you don't know me. I laughed, and rallied her a little; but I was unwilling to be too severe. No, I could not be too severe, curse me!

*Miss Hard.* O! then, sir, you are a favourite, I find, among the ladies?

*Mar.* Yes, my dear, a great favourite. And yet, hang me, I don't see what they find in me to follow. At the Ladies club in town, I'm called their agreeable Rattle. Rattle, child, is not my real name, but one I'm known by. My name is Solomons. Mr Solomons, my dear, at your service! [*Offering to salute her.*

*Miss Hard.* Hold, sir! you were introducing me to your club, not to yourself. And you're so great a favourite there, you say?

*Mar.* Yes, my dear. There's Mrs Mantrap, lady Betty Blackleg, the countess of Sligo, Mrs Longhorns, old miss Biddy Buckskin, and your humble servant, keep up the spirit of the place.

*Miss Hard.* Then it's a very merry place, I suppose?

*Mar.* Yes, as merry as cards, suppers, wine, and old women, can make us.

*Miss Hard.* And their agreeable Rattle, ha, ha, ha!

*Mar.* [*Aside.*] Egad! I don't quite like this chit. She looks knowing, methinks. You laugh, child!

*Miss Hard.* I can't but laugh to think what

time they all have for minding their work, or their family.

*Mar.* [*Aside.*] All's well; she don't laugh at me.—[*To her.*] Do you ever work, child?

*Miss Hard.* Ay, sure. There's not a screen or quilt in the whole house but what can bear witness to that.

*Mar.* Odso! Then you must shew me your embroidery. I embroider and draw patterns myself a little. If you want a judge of your work, you must apply to me. [*Seizing her hand.*

*Miss Hard.* Ay, but the colours don't look well by candle-light. You shall see all in the morning. [*Struggling.*

*Mar.* And why not now, my angel? Such beauty fires beyond the power of resistance.—— Pshaw! the father here! My old luck! I never nicked seven that I did not throw ames ace three times following. [*Exit* MARLOW.

*Enter* HARDCASTLE, *who stands in surprise.*

*Hard.* So, madam! So I find this is your modest lover. This is your humble admirer, that kept his eyes fixed on the ground, and only adored at humble distance. Kate, Kate! art thou not ashamed to deceive your father so?

*Miss Hard.* Never trust me, dear papa, but he's still the modest man I first took him for; you'll be convinced of it as well as I.

*Hard.* By the hand of my body I believe his impudence is infectious! Didn't I see him seize your hand? Did'nt I see him hawl you about like a milkmaid? and now you talk of his respect and his modesty, forsooth!

*Miss Hard.* But if I shortly convince you of his modesty, that he has only the faults that will pass off with time, and the virtues that will improve with age, I hope you'll forgive him.

*Hard.* The girl would actually make one run mad; I tell you I'll not be convinced. I am convinced. He has scarcely been three hours in the house, and he has already encroached on all my prerogatives. You may like his impudence, and call it modesty. But my son-in-law, madam, must have very different qualifications.

*Miss Hard.* Sir, I ask but this night to convince you.

*Hard.* You shall not have half the time; for I have thoughts of turning him out this very hour.

*Miss Hard.* Give me that hour then, and I hope to satisfy you.

*Hard.* Well, an hour let it be then. But I'll have no trifling with your father. All fair and open, do you mind me?

*Miss Hard.* I hope, sir, you have ever found that I considered your commands as my pride; for your kindness is such, that my duty as yet has been inclination. [*Exeunt.*

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.

*Enter* HASTINGS *and* MISS NEVILLE.

*Hast.* You surprise me! Sir Charles Marlow expected here this night? Where have you had your information?

*Miss Nev.* You may depend upon it. I just saw his letter to Mr Hardcastle, in which he tells him he intends setting out a few hours after his son.

*Hast.* Then, my Constance, all must be completed before he arrives. He knows me; and should he find me here, would discover my name, and perhaps my designs, to the rest of the family.

*Miss Nev.* The jewels, I hope, are safe?

*Hast.* Yes, yes. I have sent them to Marlow, who keeps the keys of our baggage. In the mean time, I'll go to prepare matters for our elopement. I have had the 'Squire's promise of a fresh pair of horses; and, if I should not see him again, will write him further directions. [*Exit.*

*Miss Nev.* Well! success attend you! In the mean time, I'll go amuse my aunt with the old pretence of a violent passion for my cousin. [*Exit.*

*Enter* MARLOW, *followed by a Servant.*

*Mar.* I wonder what Hastings could mean, by sending me so valuable a thing as a casket to keep for him, when he knows the only place I have is the seat of a post coach at an inn-door! Have you deposited the casket with the landlady, as I ordered you? Have you put it into her own hands?

*Ser.* Yes, your honour.

*Mar.* She said she'd keep it safe, did she?

*Ser.* Yes, she said she'd keep it safe enough; she asked me how I came by it? and she said she had a great mind to make me give an account of myself. [*Exit Servant.*

*Mar.* Ha, ha, ha! They're safe, however. What an unaccountable set of beings have we got amongst! This little bar-maid, though, runs in my head most strangely, and drives out the absurdities of all the rest of the family. She's mine; she must be mine, or I'm greatly mistaken.

*Enter* HASTINGS.

*Hast.* Bless me! I quite forgot to tell her that I intended to prepare at the bottom of the garden. Marlow here, and in spirits, too!

*Mar.* Give me joy, George! Crown me, sha-

dow me with laurels! Well, George, after all, we modest fellows don't want for success among the women.

*Hast.* Some women, you mean. But what success has your honour's modesty been crowned with now, that it grows so insolent upon us?

*Mar.* Did not you see the tempting, brisk, lovely, little thing, that runs about the house with a bunch of keys to its girdle?

*Hast.* Well! and what then?

*Mar.* She's mine, you rogue you! Such fire, such motion, such eyes, such lips!——but, egad! she would not let me kiss them though.

*Hast.* But are you so sure, so very sure of her?

*Mar.* Why, man, she talked of shewing me her work above stairs, and I'm to improve the pattern.

*Hast.* But how can you, Charles, go about to rob a woman of her honour?

*Mar.* Pshaw! pshaw! We all know the honour of the bar-maid of an inn. I don't intend to rob her, take my word for it; there's nothing in this house I shan't honestly pay for.

*Hast.* I believe the girl has virtue.

*Mar.* And if she has, I should be the last man in the world that would attempt to corrupt it.

*Hast.* You have taken care, I hope, of the casket I sent you to lock up? It's in safety?

*Mar.* Yes, yes. It's safe enough. I have taken care of it. But how could you think the seat of a post-coach at an inn-door a place of safety? Ah, numbskull! I have taken better precautions for you, than you did for yourself.——I have——

*Hast.* What?

*Mar.* I have sent it to the landlady to keep for you.

*Hast.* To the landlady?

*Mar.* The landlady.

*Hast.* You did?

*Mar.* I did. She's to be answerable for its forthcoming, you know.

*Hast.* Yes; she'll bring it forth, with a witness!

*Mar.* Was not I right? I believe you'll allow that I acted prudently upon this occasion?

*Hast.* [*Aside.*] He must not see my uneasiness.

*Mar.* You seem a little disconcerted though, methinks. Sure nothing has happened?

*Hast.* No; nothing! Never was in better spirits in all my life! And so you left it with the landlady, who, no doubt, very readily undertook the charge?

*Mar.* Rather too readily. For she not only kept the casket, but, through her great precaution, was going to keep the messenger, too. Ha, ha, ha!

*Hast.* He, he, he! They're safe, however.

*Mar.* As a guinea in a miser's purse.

*Hast.* [*Aside.*] So now, all hopes of fortune are at an end, and we must set off without it. [*To him.*] Well, Charles, I'll leave you to your meditations on the pretty bar-maid, and, he, he, he! may you be as successful for yourself as you have been for me! [*Exit* HAST.

*Mar.* Thank ye, George! I ask no more, ha, ha, ha!

*Enter* HARDCASTLE.

*Hard.* I no longer know my own house. It is turned all topsy-turvy. His servants have got drunk already. I'll bear it no longer; and yet, from my respect for his father, I'll be calm. [*To him.*] Mr Marlow, your servant. I'm your very humble servant. [*Bowing low.*

*Mar.* Sir, your humble servant. [*Aside.*] What's to be the wonder now?

*Hard.* I believe, sir, you must be sensible, sir, that no man alive ought to be more welcome than your father's son, sir. I hope you think so?

*Mar.* I do from my soul, sir. I don't want much entreaty. I generally make my father's son welcome wherever he goes.

*Hard.* I believe you do, from my soul, sir. But, though I say nothing to your own conduct, that of your servants is insufferable. Their manner of drinking is setting a very bad example in this house, I assure you.

*Mar.* I protest, my very good sir, that's no fault of mine. If they don't drink as they ought, they are to blame. I ordered them not to spare the cellar. I did, I assure you. [*To the side scene.*] Here, let one of my servants come up. [*To him.*] My positive directions were, that as I did not drink myself, they should make up for my deficiencies below.

*Hard.* Then, they had your orders for what they do? I'm satisfied.

*Mar.* They had, I assure you. You shall hear from one of themselves.

*Enter Servant drunk.*

*Mar.* You, Jeremy! Come forward, sirrah! What were my orders? Were you not told to drink freely, and call for what you thought fit, for the good of the house?

*Hard.* [*Aside.*] I begin to lose my patience.

*Jer.* Please your honour, liberty and Fleet-street for ever! Though I'm but a servant, I'm as good as another man. I'll drink for no man before supper, sir, dammy! Good liquor will sit upon a good supper, but a good supper will not sit upon———hiccup———upon my conscience, sir! [*Staggers out.*

*Mar.* You see, my old friend, the fellow is as drunk as he can possibly be! I don't know what you'd have more, unless you'd have the poor devil soused in a beer-barrel.

*Hard.* Zounds! He'll drive me distracted, if I contain myself any longer! Mr Marlow. Sir; I have submitted to your insolence for more than four hours, and I see no likelihood of its coming to an end. I'm now resolved to be master here,

sir, and I desire that you and your drunken pack may leave my house directly!

*Mar.* Leave your house!——Sure you jest, my good friend? What, when I'm doing what I can to please you?

*Hard.* I tell you, sir, you don't please me; so I desire you'll leave my house!

*Mar.* Sure you cannot be serious? At this time o'night, and such a night! You only mean to banter me?

*Hard.* I tell you, sir, I'm serious! and, now that my passions are roused, I say this house is mine, sir; this house is mine, and I command you to leave it directly.

*Mar.* Ha, ha, ha! A puddle in a storm! I shan't stir a step, I assure you! [*In a serious tone.*] This your house, fellow! It's my house! This is my house! Mine, while I choose to stay! What right have you to bid me leave this house, sir? I never met with such impudence, curse me, never in my whole life before!

*Hard.* Nor I; confound me if ever I did! To come to my house, to call for what he likes, to turn me out of my own chair, to insult the family, to order his servants to get drunk, and then to tell me, This house is mine, sir! By all that's impudent, it makes me laugh! Ha, ha, ha! Pray, sir, [*Bantering.*] as you take the house, what think you of taking the rest of the furniture? There's a pair of silver candlesticks, and there's a fire-screen, and here's a pair of brazen-nosed bellows, perhaps you may take a fancy to them?

*Mar.* Bring me your bill, sir, bring me your bill, and let's make no more words about it.

*Hard.* There are a set of prints, too. What think you of the rake's progress for your own apartment?

*Mar.* Bring me your bill, I say: and I'll leave you and your infernal house directly!

*Hard.* Then, there's a mahogany table, that you may see your face in!

*Mar.* My bill, I say!

*Hard.* I had forgot the great chair, for your own particular slumbers, after a hearty meal!

*Mar.* Zounds! bring me my bill, I say, and let's hear no more on't!

*Hard.* Young man, young man, from your father's letter to me, I was taught to expect a well-bred, modest man, as a visitor here; but now, I find him no better than a coxcomb and a bully; but he will be down here presently, and shall hear more of it. [*Exit.*

*Mar.* How's this! Sure I have not mistaken the house! Every thing looks like an inn. The servants cry, Coming. The attendance is awkward; the bar-maid, too, to attend us. But she's here, and will further inform me. Whither so fast, child? A word with you.

*Enter* MISS HARDCASTLE.

*Miss Hard.* Let it be short, then; I'm in a hurry. [*Aside.*] I believe he begins to find out his mistake, but it is too soon quite to undeceive him.

*Mar.* Pray, child, answer me one question. What are you, and what may your business in this house be?

*Miss Hard.* A relation of the family, sir.

*Mar.* What! A poor relation?

*Miss Hard.* Yes, sir! A poor relation, appointed to keep the keys, and to see that the guests want nothing in my power to give them.

*Mar.* That is, you act as the bar-maid of this inn?

*Miss Hard.* Inn! O law—What brought that in your head? One of the best families in the county keep an inn! Ha, ha, ha! Old Mr Hardcastle's house an inn!

*Mar.* Mr Hardcastle's house! Is this house Mr Hardcastle's house, child?

*Miss Hard.* Ay, sure. Whose else should it be!

*Mar.* So, then, all's out, and I have been damnably imposed on! O! confound my stupid head! I shall be laughed at over the whole town! I shall be stuck up in caricatura in all the print-shops! The Dullissimo Maccaroni. To mistake this house of all others for an inn; and my father's old friend for an inn-keeper! What a swaggering puppy must he take me for! What a silly puppy do I find myself! There, again, may I be hanged, my dear, but I mistook you for the bar-maid!

*Miss Hard.* Dear me! Dear me! I'm sure there's nothing in my behaviour to put me upon a level with one of that stamp.

*Mar.* Nothing, my dear, nothing. But I was in for a list of blunders, and could not help making you a subscriber. My stupidity saw every thing the wrong way. I mistook your assiduity for assurance, and your simplicity for allurement. But its over—This house I no more shew my face in!

*Miss Hard.* I hope, sir, I have done nothing to disoblige you! I'm sure I should be sorry to affront any gentleman who has been so polite, and said so many civil things to me. I'm sure I should be sorry [*Pretending to cry.*] if he left the family upon my account. I'm sure I should be sorry people said any thing amiss, since I have no fortune but my character.

*Mar.* [*Aside.*] By Heaven, she weeps! This is the first mark of tenderness I ever had from a modest woman, and it touches me. [*To her.*] Excuse me, my lovely girl; you are the only part of the family I leave with reluctance! But, to be plain with you, the difference of our birth, fortune, and education, make an honourable connexion impossible; and I can never harbour a thought of bringing ruin upon one, whose only fault was being too lovely.

*Miss Hard.* [*Aside.*] Generous man! I now begin to admire him! [*To him.*] But I'm sure my family is as good as Miss Hardcastle's, and, though

I'm poor, that's no great misfortune to a contented mind; and, until this moment, I never thought that it was bad to want fortune.

*Mar.* And why now, my pretty simplicity?

*Miss Hard.* Because it puts me at a distance from one, that if I had a thousand pound, I would give it all to.

*Mar.* [*Aside.*] This simplicity bewitches me; so that, if I stay, I'm undone. I must make one bold effort, and leave her. [*To her.*] Your partiality in my favour, my dear, touches me most sensibly, and were I to live for myself alone, I could easily fix my choice. But I owe too much to the opinion of the world, too much to the authority of a father, so that—I can scarcely speak it—it affects me. Farewell! [*Exit* MAR.

*Miss Hard.* I never knew half his merit till now. He shall not go, if I have power or art to detain him. I'll still preserve the character in which I stooped to conquer, but will undeceive my papa, who, perhaps, may laugh him out of his resolution. [*Exit* MISS HARDCASTLE.

*Enter* TONY, *and* MISS NEVILLE.

*Tony.* Ay, you may steal for yourselves the next time; I have done my duty. She has got the jewels again, that's a sure thing; but she believes it was all a mistake of the servants.

*Miss Nev.* But, my dear cousin, sure you won't forsake us in this distress. If she in the least suspects that I am going off, I shall certainly be locked up, or sent to my aunt Pedigree's, which is ten times worse.

*Tony.* To be sure, aunts of all kinds are damned bad things. But what can I do? I have got you a pair of horses that will fly like Whistlejacket, and I'm sure you can't say but I have courted you nicely before her face. Here she comes; we must court a bit or two more, for fear she should suspect us.

[*They retire, and seem to fondle.*

*Enter* MRS HARDCASTLE.

*Mrs Hard.* Well, I was greatly fluttered, to be sure. But my son tells me it was all a mistake of the servants. I shan't be easy, however, till they are fairly married; and then, let her keep her own fortune. But, what do I see? Fondling together, as I'm alive! I never saw Tony so sprightly before! Ah! have I caught you, my pretty doves! What, billing, exchanging stolen glances, and broken murmurs? Ah!

*Tony.* As for murmurs, mother, we grumble a little now and then, to be sure. But there's no love lost between us.

*Mrs Hard.* A mere sprinkling, Tony, upon the flame, only to make it burn brighter.

*Miss Nev.* Cousin Tony promises to give us more of his company at home. Indeed, he shan't leave us any more. It won't leave us, cousin Tony, will it?

*Tony.* O! it's a pretty creature. No, I'd sooner leave my horse in a pound, than leave you when you smile upon one so. Your laugh makes you so becoming.

*Miss Nev.* Agreeable cousin! who can help admiring that natural humour, that pleasant, broad, red, thoughtless, [*Patting his cheek.*] Ah! it's a bold face!

*Mrs Hard.* Pretty innocence!

*Tony.* I'm sure I always loved cousin Con's hazel eyes, and her pretty long fingers, that she twists this way and that, over the haspicholls, like a parcel of bobbins.

*Mrs Hard.* Ah, he would charm the bird from the tree! I was never so happy before! My boy takes after his father, poor Mr Lumpkin, exactly! The jewels, my dear Con, shall be yours incontinently. You shall have them. Is not he a sweet boy, my dear? You shall be married tomorrow, and we'll put off the rest of his education, like Dr Drowsey's sermons, to a fitter opportunity.

*Enter* DIGGORY.

*Dig.* Where's the 'Squire? I have got a letter for your worship.

*Tony.* Give it to my mamma. She reads all my letters first.

*Dig.* I had orders to deliver it into your own hands.

*Tony.* Who does it come from?

*Dig.* Your worship mun ask that o' the letter itself.

*Tony.* I could wish to know, though.

[*Turning the letter, and gazing on it.*

*Miss Nev.* [*Aside.*] Undone, undone. A letter to him from Hastings. I know the hand. If my aunt sees it, we are ruined for ever. I'll keep her employed a little if I can. [*To* MRS HARDCASTLE.] But I have not told you, madam, of my cousin's smart answer just now to Mr Marlow. We so laughed—You must know, madam—this way a little, for he must not hear us.

[*They confer.*

*Tony.* [*Still gazing.*] A damned cramped piece of penmanship, as ever I saw in my life! I can read your print-hand very well. But here there are such handles, and shanks, and dashes, that one can scarce tell the head from the tail. 'To 'Anthony Lumpkin, Esq.' It's very odd, I can read the outside of my letters, where my own name is, well enough. But, when I come to open it, it's all—buzz. That's hard, very hard: for the inside of the letter is always the cream of the correspondence.

*Mrs Hard.* Ha, ha, ha! Very well, very well. And so my son was too hard for the philosopher?

*Miss Nev.* Yes, madam; but you must hear the rest, madam. A little more this way, or he may hear us. You'll hear how he puzzled him again.

*Mrs Hard.* He seems strangely puzzled now himself, methinks.

*Tony.* [*Still gazing.*] A damned up and down hand, as if it was disguised in liquor. [*Reading.*] 'Dear sir,' Ay, that's that. Then there's an M, and a T, and an S! but whether the next be an izzard or an R, confound me, I cannot tell!

*Mrs Hard.* What's that, my dear? Can I give you any assistance?

*Miss Nev.* Pray, aunt, let me read it. Nobody reads a cramp hand better than I. [*Twitching the letter from her.*] Do you know who it is from?

*Tony.* Can't tell, except from Dick Ginger, the feeder.

*Miss Nev.* Ay, so it is, [*Pretending to read.*] 'Dear Squire, hoping that you're in health, as I 'am at this present. The gentlemen of the 'Shake-bag club has cut the gentlemen of the 'Goose-green quite out of feather. The odds— '—um—odd battle——um—long fighting—um.' here, here; it's all about cocks, and fighting; it's of no consequence; here, put it up, put it up.

[*Thrusting the crumpled letter upon him.*

*Tony.* But I tell you, miss, it's of all the consequence in the world. I would not lose the rest of it for a guinea. Here, mother, do you make it out. Of no consequence?

[*Giving* MRS HARDCASTLE *the letter.*

*Mrs Hard.* How is this! [*Reads.*] 'Dear 'Squire, I am now waiting for Miss Neville, with 'a post chaise and pair, at the bottom of the 'garden; but I find my horses yet unable to per-'form the journey. I expect you'll assist us 'with a pair of fresh horses, as you promised.— 'Dispatch is necessary, as the hag (ay the hag) 'your mother, will otherwise suspect us. Your's, 'Hastings.' Grant me patience! I shall run distracted! My rage chokes me!

*Miss Nev.* I hope, madam, you'll suspend your resentment for a few moments, and not impute to me any impertinence, or sinister design, that belongs to another.

*Mrs Hard.* [*Curtseying very low.*] Fine spoken madam! you are most miraculously polite and engaging, and quite the very pink of courtesy and circumspection. Madam! [*Changing her tone.*] And you, you great ill-fashioned oaf, with scarce sense enough to keep your mouth shut! Were you, too, joined against me? But I'll defeat all your plots in a moment. As for you, madam, since you have got a pair of fresh horses ready, it would be cruel to disappoint them. So, if you please, instead of running away with your spark, prepare, this very moment, to run off with me. Your old aunt Pedigree will keep you secure, I'll warrant me. You, too, sir, may mount your horse, and guard us upon the way. Here, Thomas, Roger, Diggory, I'll shew you, that I wish you better than you do yourselves. [*Exit.*

*Miss Nev.* So, now, I'm completely ruined!

*Tony.* Ay, that's a sure thing.

*Miss Nev.* What better could be expected from being conneted with such a stupid fool, and after all the nods and signs I made him!

*Tony.* By the laws, miss, it was your own cleverness, and not my stupidity, that did your business. You were so nice, and so busy with your Shake-bags and Goose-greens, that I thought you could never be making believe.

*Enter* HASTINGS.

*Hast.* So, sir, I find, by my servant, that you have shewn my letter, and betrayed us. Was this well done, young gentleman?

*Tony.* Here's another. Ask miss, there, who betrayed you. Ecod, it was her doing, not mine.

*Enter* MARLOW.

*Mar.* So I have been finely used here among you! Rendered contemptible, driven into ill-manners, despised, insulted, laughed at!

*Tony.* Here's another! We shall have old Bedlam broke loose presently.

*Miss Nev.* And there, sir, is the gentleman to whom we all owe every obligation.

*Mar.* What can I say to him? a mere booby, an idiot, whose ignorance and age are a protection.

*Hast.* A poor contemptible booby, that would but disgrace correction.

*Miss Nev.* Yet with cunning and malice enough to make himself merry with all our embarrassments.

*Hast.* An insensible cub.

*Mar.* Replete with tricks and mischief.

*Tony.* Baw! damme, but I'll fight you both, one after the other—with baskets.

*Mar.* As for him, he's below resentment.—— But your conduct, Mr Hastings, requires an explanation. You knew of my mistakes, yet would not undeceive me!

*Hast.* Tortured as I am with my own disappointments, is this a time for explanations? It is not friendly, Mr Marlow.

*Mar.* But, sir———

*Miss Nev.* Mr Marlow, we never kept on your mistake, till it was too late to undeceive you.— Be pacified.

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* My mistress desires you'll get ready immediately, madam. The horses are putting to. Your hat and things are in the next room. We are to go thirty miles before morning.

[*Exit Servant.*

*Miss Nev.* Well, well; I'll come presently.

*Mar.* [*To* HASTINGS.] Was it well done, sir, to assist in rendering me ridiculous? To hang me out for the scorn of all my acquaintance? Depend upon it, sir, I shall expect an explanation.

*Hast.* Was it well done, sir, if you are upon

that subject, to deliver, what I entrusted to yourself, to the care of another, sir?

*Miss Nev.* Mr Hastings! Mr Marlow!——— Why will you increase my distress by this groundless dispute? I implore, I entreat you———

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Your cloak, madam. My mistress is impatient.

*Miss Nev.* I come. Pray, be pacified. If I leave you thus, I shall die with apprehension.

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Your fan, muff, and gloves, madam. The horses are waiting.

*Miss Nev.* O, Mr Marlow! if you knew what a scene of constraint and ill-nature lies before me, I am sure it would convert your resentment into pity.

*Mar.* I am so distracted with a variety of passions, that I don't know what I do. Forgive me, madam. George, forgive me. You know my hasty temper, and should not exasperate it.

*Hast.* The torture of my situation is my only excuse.

*Miss Nev.* Well, my dear Hastings, if you have that esteem for me, that I think, that I am sure you have, your constancy for three years will but increase the happiness of our future connection. If——

*Mrs Hard.* [*Within.*] Miss Neville. Constance! why Constance, I say!

*Miss Nev.* I'm coming. Well, constancy.—Remember, constancy is the word. [*Exit.*

*Hast.* My heart, how can I support this? To be so near happiness, and such happiness!

*Mar.* [*To* TONY.] You see now, young gentleman, the effects of your folly. What might be amusement to you, is here disappointment, and even distress.

*Tony.* [*From a reverie.*] Ecod, I have hit it! It's here. Your hands. Yours and yours, my poor Sulky. My boots there, ho! Meet me two hours hence, at the bottom of the garden; and if you don't find Tony Lumpkin a more good-natured fellow than you thought for, I'll give you leave to take my best horse, and Bet Bouncer into the bargain. Come along! My boots, ho! [*Exeunt.*

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—*Continues.*

*Enter* HASTINGS *and Servant.*

*Hast.* You saw the old lady and Miss Neville drive off, you say?

*Ser.* Yes, your honour. They went off in a post coach, and the young 'squire went on horseback. They're thirty miles off by this time.

*Hast.* Then, all my hopes are over!

*Ser.* Yes, sir. Old sir Charles is arrived.—He, and the old gentleman of the house, have been laughing at Mr Marlow's mistake this half hour. They are coming this way.

*Hast.* Then, I must not be seen. So, now to my fruitless appointment at the bottom of the garden. This is about the time. [*Exit.*

*Enter* SIR CHARLES MARLOW *and* HARDCASTLE.

*Hard.* Ha, ha, ha! The peremptory tone in which he sent forth his sublime commands!

*Sir Cha.* And the reserve, with which, I suppose, he treated all your advances!

*Hard.* And yet he might have seen something in me above a common inn-keeper, too.

*Sir Cha.* Yes, Dick! but he mistook you for an uncommon inn-keeper, ha, ha, ha!

*Hard.* Well, I am in too good spirits to think of any thing but joy. Yes, my dear friend, this union of our families will make our personal friendships hereditary; and though my daughter's fortune is but small——

*Sir Cha.* Why, Dick, will you talk of fortune to me? My son is possessed of more than a competence already, and can want nothing but a good and virtuous girl to share his happiness, and encrease it. If they like each other, as you say they do———

*Hard.* If, man? I tell you they do like each other. My daughter as good as told me so.

*Sir Cha.* But girls are apt to flatter themselves, you know.

*Hard.* I saw him grasp her hand in the warmest manner myself; and here he comes to put you out of your ifs, I warrant him.

*Enter* MARLOW.

*Mar.* I come, sir, once more, to ask pardon for my strange conduct. I can scarce reflect on my insolence without confusion?

*Hard.* Tut, boy! a trifle. You take it too gravely. An hour or two's laughing with my daughter will set all to rights again—She'll never like you the worse for it.

*Mar.* Sir, I shall be always proud of her approbation.

*Hard.* Approbation is but a cold word, Mr Marlow; if I am not deceived, you have something more than approbation thereabouts. You take me?

*Mar.* Really, sir, I have not that happiness.

*Hard.* Come, boy; I'm an old fellow, and know what's what, as well as you that are younger. I know what has past between you—— but mum.

*Mar.* Sure, sir, nothing has past between us

but the most profound respect on my side, and the most distant reserve on hers. You don't think, sir, that my impudence has been passed upon all the rest of the family?

*Hard.* Impudence! No, I don't say that—Not quite impudence—Though girls like to be played with, and rumpled too, sometimes. But she has told no tales, I assure you.

*Mar.* I never gave her the slightest cause.

*Hard.* Well, well. I like modesty in its place well enough. But this is over acting, young gentleman. You may be open. Your father and I will like you the better for it.

*Mar.* May I die, sir, if I ever——

*Hard.* I tell you, she don't dislike you; and as I'm sure you like her——

*Mar.* Dear—I protest, sir——

*Hard.* I see no reason why you should not be joined as fast as the parson can tie you.

*Mar.* But hear me, sir——

*Hard.* Your father approves the match, I admire it, every moment's delay will be doing mischief, so——

*Mar.* But why won't you hear me? By all that's just and true, I never gave Miss Hardcastle the slightest mark of my attachment, or even the most distant hint to suspect me of affection. We had but one interview, and that was formal, modest, and uninteresting.

*Hard.* [*Aside.*] This fellow's formal, modest impudence, is beyond bearing.

*Sir Cha.* And you never grasped her hand, or made any protestations?

*Mar.* As Heaven is my witness, I came down in obedience to your commands! I saw the lady without emotion, and parted without reluctance. I hope you'll exact no further proofs of my duty, nor prevent me from leaving a house, in which I suffer so many mortifications. [*Exit.*

*Sir Cha.* I'm astonished at the air of sincerity with which he parted!

*Hard.* And I'm astonished at the deliberate intrepidity of his assurance.

*Sir Cha.* I dare pledge my life and honour upon his truth.

*Hard.* Here comes my daughter, and I would stake my happiness upon her veracity.

*Enter* MISS HARDCASTLE.

Kate, come hither, child. Answer us sincerely, and without reserve; has Mr Marlow made you any professions of love and affection?

*Miss Hard.* The question is very abrupt, sir! But since you require unreserved sincerity, I think he has.

*Hard.* [*To* SIR CHARLES.] You see!

*Sir Cha.* And pray, madam, have you and my son had more than one interview?

*Miss Hard.* Yes, sir, several.

*Hard.* [*To* SIR CHARLES.] You see!

*Sir Cha.* But did he profess any attachment?

*Miss Hard.* A lasting one.

*Sir Cha.* Did he talk of love?

*Miss Hard.* Much, sir.

*Sir Cha.* Amazing! And all this formally?

*Miss Hard.* Formally.

*Hard.* Now, my friend, I hope you are satisfied?

*Sir Cha.* And how did he behave, madam?

*Miss Hard.* As most profest admirers do. Said some civil things of my face, talked much of his want of merit, and the greatness of mine; mentioned his heart, gave a short tragedy-speech, and ended with pretended rapture.

*Sir Cha.* Now I'm perfectly convinced, indeed. I know his conversation among women to be modest and submissive. This forward, canting, ranting manner, by no means describes him, and I'm confident he never sat for the picture.

*Miss Hard.* Then what, sir, if I should convince you to your face of my sincerity? If you and my papa, in about half an hour, will place yourselves behind that screen, you shall hear him declare his passion to me in person.

*Sir Cha.* Agreed. And if I find him what you describe, all my happiness in him must have an end. [*Exit.*

*Miss Hard.* And if you don't find him what I describe—I fear my happiness must never have a beginning. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The back of the garden.*

*Enter* HASTINGS.

*Hast.* What an ideot am I, to wait here for a fellow, who probably takes a delight in mortifying me. He never intended to be punctual, and I'll wait no longer. What do I see? It is he, and perhaps with news of my Constance.

*Enter* TONY, *booted and spattered.*

My honest 'squire! I now find you a man of your word. This looks like friendship.

*Tony.* Ay, I'm your friend, and the best friend you have in the world, if you knew but all. This riding by night, by the by, is cursedly tiresome. It has shook me worse than the basket of a stage coach.

*Hast.* But how? Where did you leave your fellow travellers? Are they in safety? Are they housed?

*Tony.* Five and twenty miles in two hours and a half, is no such bad driving. The poor beasts have smoked for it: Rabbit me, but I'd rather ride forty miles after a fox, than ten with such varment!

*Hast.* Well, but where have you left the ladies? I die with impatience.

*Tony.* Left them? Why, where should I leave them, but where I found them?

*Hast.* This is a riddle!

*Tony.* Riddle me this then. What's that goes round the house, and round the house, and never touches the house?

*Hast.* I'm still astray.

*Tony.* Why that's it, mun. I have led them astray. By jingo, there's not a pond or slough within five miles of the place but they can tell the taste of!

*Hast.* Ha, ha, ha! I understand; you took them in a round, while they supposed themselves going forward. And so you have at last brought them home again!

*Tony.* You shall hear. I first took them down Feather-bed-lane, where we stuck fast in the mud. I then rattled them crack over the stones of Up-and-down Hill—I then introduced them to the gibbet on Heavy-tree Heath—and from that, with a circumbendibus, I fairly lodged them in the horsepond at the bottom of the garden.

*Hast.* But no accident, I hope?

*Tony.* No, no. Only mother is confoundedly frightened. She thinks herself forty miles off. She's sick of the journey, and the cattle can scarce crawl. So, if your own horses be ready, you may whip off with cousin, and I'll be bound that no soul here can budge a foot to follow you.

*Hast.* My dear friend, how can I be grateful?

*Tony.* Ay, now its dear friend, noble 'squire. Just now, it was all idiot, cub, and run me through the guts. Damn your way of fighting, I say! After we take a knock in this part of the country, we kiss and be friends. But if you had run me through the guts, then I should be dead, and you might go kiss the hangman.

*Hast.* The rebuke is just. But I must hasten to relieve Miss Neville. If you keep the old lady employed, I promise to take care of the young one. [*Exit* HASTINGS.

*Tony.* Never fear me. Here she comes! Vanish! She's got from the pond, and draggled up to the waist like a mermaid.

*Enter* MRS HARDCASTLE.

*Mrs Hard.* Oh, Tony, I'm killed! Shook! Battered to death! I shall never survive it!—That last jolt, that laid us against the quickset hedge, has done my business.

*Tony.* Alack, mamma, it was all your own fault. You would be for running away by night, without knowing one inch of the way.

*Mrs Hard.* I wish we were at home again! I never met so many accidents in so short a journey. Drenched in the mud, overturned in a ditch, stuck fast in a slough, jolted to a jelly, and at last to lose our way! Whereabouts do you think we are, Tony?

*Tony.* By my guess, we should be upon Crackskull common, about forty miles from home.

*Mrs Hard.* O lud! O lud! the most notorious spot in all the country. We only want a robbery to make a complete night on't.

*Tony.* Don't be afraid, mamma, don't be afraid. Two of the five that kept here are hanged, and the other three may not find us. Don't be afraid. Is that a man that's galloping behind us? No; its only a tree. Don't be afraid.

*Mrs Hard.* The fright will certainly kill me!

*Tony.* Do you see any thing like a black hat moving behind the thicket?

*Mrs Hard.* O death!

*Tony.* No, its only a cow. Don't be afraid, mamma—don't be afraid.

*Mrs Hard.* As I'm alive, Tony, I see a man coming towards us! Ah! I'm sure on't. If he perceives us, we are undone.

*Tony.* [*Aside.*] Father in law, by all that's unlucky, come to take one of his night walks! [*To her.*] Ah, its a highwayman, with pistols as long as my arm. A damned ill looking fellow!

*Mrs Hard.* Good Heaven defend us! He approaches.

*Tony.* Do you hide yourself in that thicket, and leave me to manage him. If there be any danger I'll cough, and cry hem! When I cough, be sure to keep close.

[MRS HARDCASTLE *hides behind a tree in the back scene.*]

*Enter* HARDCASTLE.

*Hard.* I'm mistaken, or I heard voices of people in want of help. Oh, Tony, is that you? I did not expect you so soon back. Are your mother and her charge in safety?

*Tony.* Very safe, sir, at my aunt Pedigree's. Hem!

*Mrs Hard.* [*From behind.*] Ah death! I find there's danger!

*Hard.* Forty miles in three hours! sure, that's too much, my youngster.

*Tony.* Stout horses and willing minds make short journies, as they say. Hem!

*Mrs Hard.* [*From behind.*] Sure he'll do the dear boy no harm!

*Hard.* But I heard a voice here; I should be glad to know from whence it came?

*Tony.* It was I, sir, talking to myself, sir. I was saying that forty miles in three hours was very good going. Hem! As to be sure it was. Hem! I have got a sort of cold by being out in the air. We'll go in, if you please? Hem!

*Hard.* But if you talked to yourself, you did not answer yourself. I am certain I heard two voices, and am resolved [*Raising his voice.*] to find the other out.

*Mrs Hard.* [*From behind.*] Oh! he's coming to find me out! Oh!

*Tony.* What need you go, sir, if I tell you? Hem! I'll lay down my life for the truth—hem—I'll tell you all, sir. [*Detaining him.*

*Hard.* I tell you, I will not be detained. I insist on seeing. It's vain to expect I'll believe you.

*Mrs Hard.* [*Running forward from behind.*] O lud! he'll murder my poor boy, my darling! Here, good gentleman, whet your rage upon me. Take my money, my life, but spare that young

gentleman! spare my child, if you have any mercy!

*Hard.* My wife! as I am a Christian. From whence can she come, or what does she mean!

*Mrs Hard.* [*Kneeling.*] Take compassion on us, good Mr Highwayman. Take our money, our watches, all we have, but spare our lives. We will never bring you to justice, indeed we won't, good Mr Highwayman!

*Hard.* I believe the woman's out of her senses! What, Dorothy, don't you know me?

*Mrs Hard.* Mr Hardcastle, as I'm alive! My fears blinded me. But who, my dear, could have expected to meet you here, in this frightful place, so far from home? What has brought you to follow us?

*Hard.* Sure, Dorothy, you have not lost your wits. So far from home, when you are within forty yards of your own door.—[*To him.*] This is one of your old tricks, you graceless rogue!—[*To her.*] Don't you know the gate, and the mulberry-tree? and don't you remember the horsepond, my dear?

*Mrs Hard.* Yes, I shall remember the horsepond as long as I live; I have caught my death in it.—[*To* TONY.] And is it to you, you graceless varlet, I owe all this? I'll teach you to abuse your mother, I will.

*Tony.* Ecod, mother, all the parish says you have spoiled me, and so you may take the fruits on't.

*Mrs Hard.* I'll spoil you, I will!

[*Follows him off the stage.*

*Hard.* There's morality, however, in his reply. [*Exit.*

*Enter* HASTINGS *and* MISS NEVILLE.

*Hast.* My dear Constance, why will you deliberate thus? If we delay a moment, all is lost for ever. Pluck up a little resolution, and we shall soon be out of the reach of her malignity.

*Miss Nev.* I find it impossible. My spirits are so sunk with the agitations I have suffered, that I am unable to face any new danger. Two or three years patience will, at last, crown us with happiness.

*Hast.* Such a tedious delay is worse than inconstancy. Let us fly, my charmer! Let us date our happiness from this very moment. Perish fortune! Love and content will increase what we possess beyond a monarch's revenue. Let me prevail.

*Miss Nev.* No, Mr Hastings; no. Prudence once more comes to my relief, and I will obey its dictates. In the moment of passion, fortune may be despised, but it ever produces a lasting repentance. I'm resolved to apply to Mr Hardcastle's compassion and justice for redress.

*Hast.* But though he had the will, he has not the power to relieve you.

*Miss Nev.* But he has influence; and upon that I am resolved to rely.

*Hast.* I have no hopes. But since you persist, I must reluctantly obey you. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE III.—*Changes.*

*Enter* SIR CHARLES MARLOW *and* MISS HARDCASTLE.

*Sir Cha.* What a situation am I in! If what you say appears, I shall then find a guilty son. If what he says be true, I shall then lose one that, of all others, I most wished for a daughter.

*Miss Hard.* I am proud of your approbation, and to shew I merit it, if you place yourselves as I directed, you shall hear his explicit declaration. But he comes.

*Sir Cha.* I'll to your father, and keep him to the appointment. [*Exit* SIR CHA.

*Enter* MARLOW.

*Mar.* Though prepared for setting out, I come once more to take leave; nor did I, till this moment, know the pain I feel in the separation.

*Miss Hard.* [*In her own natural manner.*] I believe these sufferings cannot be very great, sir, which you can so easily remove. A day or two longer, perhaps, might lessen your uneasiness, by shewing the little value of what you now think proper to regret.

*Mar.* [*Aside.*] This girl every moment improves upon me.—[*To her.*] It must not be, madam. I have already trifled too long with my heart. My very pride begins to submit to my passion. The disparity of education and fortune, the anger of a parent, and the contempt of my equals, begin to lose their weight; and nothing can restore me to myself, but this painful effort of resolution.

*Miss Hard.* Then go, sir. I'll urge nothing more to detain you. Though my family be as good as hers you came down to visit, and my education, I hope, not inferior, what are these advantages without equal affluence? I must remain contented with the slight approbation of imputed merit; I must have only the mockery of your addresses, while all your serious aims are fixed on fortune.

*Enter* HARDCASTLE *and* SIR CAARLES MARLOW *from behind.*

*Sir Cha.* Here, behind this screen.

*Hard.* Ay, ay; make no noise. I'll engage my Kate covers him with confusion at last.

*Mar.* By heavens, madam, fortune was ever my smallest consideration! Your beauty at first caught my eye; for, who could see that without emotion? But every moment that I converse with you, steals in some new grace, heightens the picture, and gives it stronger expression. What at first seemed rustic plainness, now appears refined simplicity. What seemed forward assurance, now strikes me as the result of courageous innocence, and conscious virtue.

*Sir Cha.* What can it mean? He amazes me!

*Hard.* I told you how it would be. Hush!

*Mar.* I am now determined to stay, madam, and I have too good an opinion of my father's discernment, when he sees you, to doubt his approbation.

*Miss Hard.* No, Mr Marlow, I will not, cannot detain you. Do you think I could suffer a connection, in which there is the smallest room for repentance? Do you think I would take the mean advantage of a transient passion, to load you with confusion? Do you think I could ever relish that happiness which was acquired by lessening yours?

*Mar.* By all that's good, I can have no happiness but what's in your power to grant me. Nor shall I ever feel repentance, but in not having seen your merits before. I will stay, even contrary to your wishes; and though you should persist to shun me, I will make my respectful assiduities atone for the levity of my past conduct.

*Miss Hard.* Sir, I must entreat you'll desist. As our acquaintance began, so let it end, in indifference. I might have given an hour or two to levity; but seriously, Mr Marlow, do you think I could ever submit to a connexion, where I must appear mercenary, and you imprudent? Do you think I could ever catch at the confident addresses of a secure admirer?

*Mar.* [*Kneeling.*] Does this look like security? Does this look like confidence? No, madam, every moment that shews me your merit, only serves to increase my diffidence and confusion. Here let me continue——

*Sir Cha.* I can hold it no longer. Charles, Charles, how hast thou deceived me! Is this your indifference, your uninteresting conversation?

*Hard.* Your cold contempt; your formal interview? What have you to say now?

*Mar.* That I'm all amazement! What can it mean?

*Hard.* It means, that you can say and unsay things at pleasure. That you can address a lady in private, and deny it in public; that you have one story for us, and another for my daughter.

*Mar.* Daughter!—this lady your daughter?

*Hard.* Yes, sir, my only daughter; my Kate; whose else should she be?

*Mar.* Oh, the devil!

*Miss Hard.* Yes, sir, that very identical, tall, squinting lady, you were pleased to take me for [*Curtesying.*]. She that you addressed as the mild, modest, sentimental man of gravity, and the bold, forward, agreeable rattle of the ladies' club; ha, ha, ha!

*Mar.* Zounds! there's no bearing this; it's worse than death!

*Miss Hard.* In which of your characters, sir, will you give us leave to address you? As the faltering gentleman, with looks on the ground, that speaks just to be heard, and hates hypocrisy; or the loud confident creature, that keeps it up with Mrs Mantrap, and old Mrs Biddy Buckskin, till three in the morning; ha, ha, ha!

*Mar.* O, curse on my noisy head! I never attempted to be impudent yet, that I was not taken down. I must be gone.

*Hard.* By the hand of my body, but you shall not! I see it was all a mistake, and I am rejoiced to find it. You shall not, sir, I tell you. I know she'll forgive you. Won't you forgive him, Kate? We'll all forgive you. Take courage, man.

[*They retire, she tormenting him to the back scene.*

*Enter* MRS HARDCASTLE, *and* TONY.

*Mrs Hard.* So, so, they're gone off! Let them go, I care not.

*Hard.* Who gone?

*Mrs Hard.* My dutiful niece and her gentleman, Mr Hastings, from town. He who came down with our modest visitor here.

*Sir Cha.* Who, my honest George Hastings? As worthy a fellow as lives, and the girl could not have made a more prudent choice.

*Hard.* Then, by the hand of my body, I'm proud of the connexion!

*Mrs Hard.* Well, if he has taken away the lady, he has not taken her fortune; that remains in this family, to console us for her loss.

*Hard.* Sure, Dorothy, you would not be so mercenary?

*Mrs Hard.* Ay, that's my affair, not yours. But, you know, if your son, when of age, refuses to marry his cousin, her whole fortune is then at her own disposal.

*Hard.* Ay, but he's not of age, and she has not thought proper to wait for his refusal.

*Enter* HASTINGS, *and* MISS NEVILLE.

*Mrs Hard.* [*Aside.*] What, returned so soon! I begin not to like it.

*Hast.* [*To* HARDCASTLE.] For my late attempt to fly off with your niece, let my present confusion be my punishment. We are now come back, to appeal from your justice to your humanity. By her father's consent, I first paid her my addresses, and our passions were first founded in duty.

*Miss Nev.* Since his death, I have been obliged to stoop to dissimulation to avoid oppression. In an hour of levity, I was ready even to give up my fortune to secure my choice. But I am now recovered from the delusion, and hope, from your tenderness, what is denied me from a nearer connexion.

*Mrs Hard.* Pshaw, pshaw! this is all but the whining end of a modern novel.

*Hard.* Be it what it will, I'm glad they are come back to reclaim their due. Come hither, Tony, boy. Do you refuse this lady's hand, whom I now offer you?

*Tony.* What signifies my refusing? You know I can't refuse her till I'm of age, father.

*Hard.* While I thought concealing your age, boy, was likely to conduce to your improvement, I concurred with your mother's desire to keep it secret. But since I find she turns it to a wrong use, I must now declare, you have been of age these three months.

*Tony.* Of age! Am I of age, father?

*Hard.* Above three months.

*Tony.* Then you'll see the first use I'll make of my liberty. [*Taking* MISS NEVILLE'S *hand.*] Witness all men, by these presents, that I, Anthony Lumpkin, esquire, of Blank place, refuse you, Constantia Neville, spinster, of no place at all, for my true and lawful wife. So Constantia Neville may marry whom she pleases, and Tony Lumpkin is his own man again.

*Sir Cha.* O brave squire!

*Hast.* My worthy friend!

*Mrs Hard.* My undutiful offspring!

*Mar.* Joy, my dear George! I give you joy sincerely. And could I prevail upon my little tyrant here to be less arbitrary, I should be the happiest man alive, if you would return me the favour.

*Hast.* [*To* MISS HARDCASTLE.] Come, madam, you are now driven to the very last scene of all your contrivances. I know you like him. I'm sure he loves you; and you must and shall have him.

*Hard.* [*Joining their hands.*] And I say so too. Mr Marlow, if she makes as good a wife as she has a daughter, I don't believe you'll ever repent your bargain. So now, to supper. To-morrow we shall gather all the poor of the parish about us, and the mistakes of the night shall be crowned with a merry morning; so, boy, take her: and, as you have been mistaken in the mistress, my wish is, that you may never be mistaken in the wife.

[*Exeunt.*

# THE

# SCHOOL FOR WIVES.

BY

*KELLY.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### MEN.

GENERAL SAVAGE, *father to* CAPT. SAVAGE.
BELVILLE, *generous, but loose in his morals.*
TORRINGTON, *a lawyer.*
LEESON, *an attorney, nephew to* MRS TEMPEST.
CAPTAIN SAVAGE, *attached to* MISS WALSINGHAM.
CONNOLLY, *an Irishman,* LEESON'S *clerk.*
SPRUCE, *servant to* BELVILLE.
GHASTLY, LEECH, CROW, WOLF, } *bailiffs.*

### WOMEN.

MISS WALSINGHAM, *attached to* CAPT. SAVAGE.
MRS BELVILLE, *wife to* BELVILLE.
LADY RACHEL MILDEW, *passtonately fond of the drama.*
MRS TEMPEST, *kept by* GENERAL SAVAGE.
MISS LEESON, *her niece.*
*Maid.*

*Scene—London.*

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—*An apartment at* BELVILLE'S.

*Enter* CAPTAIN SAVAGE, *and* MISS WALSINGHAM.

*Capt. Sav.* HA, ha, ha! Well, Miss Walsingham, this fury is going; what a noble peal she has rung in Belville's ears!

*Miss Wal.* Did she see you, captain Savage?

*Capt Sav.* No, I took care of that; for though she is not married to my father, she has ten times the influence of a wife, and might injure me not a little with him, if I did not support her side of the question.

*Miss Wal.* It was a pleasant conceit of Mr Belville, to insinuate the poor woman was disordered in her senses!——

*Capt Sav.* And, did you observe how the termagant's violence of temper supported the probability of the charge?

*Miss Wal.* Yes; she became almost frantic, in reality, when she found herself treated like a mad-woman.

*Capt. Sav.* Belville's affected surprise, too, was admirable!

*Miss Wal.* Yes; the hypocritical composure of his countenance, and his counterfeit pity for the poor woman, were intolerable.

*Capt. Sav.* While that amiable creature, his wife, implicitly believed every syllable he said—

*Miss Wal.* And felt nothing but pity for the accuser, instead of paying the least regard to the accusation. But pray, is it really under a pretence of getting the girl upon the stage, that Belville has taken away Mrs Tempest's niece from the people she boarded with?

*Capt. Sav.* It is. Belville, ever on the look-out for fresh objects, met her in those primitive regions of purity, the Green-Boxes; where, discovering that she was passionately desirous of becoming an actress, he improved his acquaintance with her, in the fictitious character of an Irish manager, and she eloped last night, to be, as she imagines, the heroine of a Dublin theatre.

*Miss Wal.* So, then, as he has kept his real name artfully concealed, Mrs Tempest can, at most, but suspect him of Miss Leeson's seduction.

*Capt. Sav.* Of no more; and this, only, from the description of the people who saw him in company with her at the play. But I wish the affair may not have a serious conclusion; for she has a brother, a very spirited young fellow, who is a counsel in the Temple, and who will certainly call Belville to an account the moment he hears of it.

*Miss Wal.* And what will become of the poor creature after he has deserted her?

*Capt. Sav.* You know that Belville is generous to profusion, and has a thousand good qualities to counterbalance this single fault of gallantry, which contaminates his character.

*Miss Wal.* You men! you men!——You are such wretches, that there's no having a moment's satisfaction with you! and, what's still more provoking, there's no having a moment's satisfaction without you!

*Capt. Sav.* Nay, don't think us all alike.

*Miss Wal.* I'll endeavour to deceive myself; for, it is but a poor argument of your sincerity, to be the confidant of another's falsehood.

*Capt. Sav.* Nay, no more of this, my love; no people live happier than Belville and his wife; nor is there a man in England, notwithstanding all his levity, who considers his wife with a warmer degree of affection: if you have a friendship, therefore, for her, let her continue in an error, so necessary to her repose, and give no hint whatever of his gallantries to any body.

*Miss Wal.* If I had no pleasure in obliging you, I have too much regard for Mrs Belville, not to follow your advice; but you need not enjoin me so strongly on the subject, when you know I can keep a secret.

*Capt Sav.* You are all goodness: and the prudence, with which you have concealed our private engagements, has eternally obliged me. Had you trusted the secret even to Mrs Belville, it would not have been safe. She would have told her husband; and he is such a rattlescull, that, notwithstanding all his regard for me, he would have mentioned it in some moment of levity, and sent it in a course of circulation to my father.

*Miss Wal.* The peculiarity of your father's temper, joined to my want of fortune, made it necessary for me to keep our engagements inviolably secret. There is no merit, therefore, either in my prudence, or in my labouring assiduously to cultivate the good opinion of the general, since both were so necessary to my own happiness. Don't despise me for this acknowledgment now.

*Capt. Sav.* Bewitching softness! But your goodness, I flatter myself, will be speedily rewarded; you are now such a favourite with him, that he is eternally talking of you; and I really fancy he means to propose you to me himself; for, last night, in a few minutes after he had declared you would make the best wife in the world, he seriously asked me, if I had any aversion to matrimony!

*Miss Wal.* Why, that was a very great concession, indeed, as he seldom stoops to consult any body's inclinations.

*Capt. Sav.* So it was, I assure you; for, in the army, being used to nothing but command and obedience, he removes the discipline of the parade into his family, and no more expects his orders should be disputed, in matters of a domestic nature, than if they were delivered at the head of his regiment.

*Miss Wal.* And yet, Mrs Tempest, who, you say, is as much a storm in her nature as her name, is disputing them eternally.

*Enter* MR *and* MRS BELVILLE.

*Bel.* Well, Miss Walsingham, have not we had a pretty morning's visitor?

*Miss Wal.* Really, I think so; and I have been asking captain Savage how long the lady has been disordered in her senses?

*Bel.* Why will they let the poor woman abroad, without some body to take care of her?

*Capt. Sav.* O, she has her lucid intervals.

*Miss Wal.* I declare I shall be as angry with you as I am with Belville.

[*Aside to the captain.*

*Mrs Bel.* You can't think how sensibly she spoke at first.

*Bel.* I should have had no conception of her madness, if she had not brought so preposterous a charge against me.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* Lady Rachel Mildew, madam, sends her compliments, and, if you are not particularly engaged, will do herself the pleasure of waiting upon you.

*Mrs Bel.* Our compliments, and we shall be glad to see her ladyship. [*Exit Servant.*

*Bel.* I wonder if lady Rachel knows that Torrington came to town last night from Bath!

*Mrs Bel.* I hope he has found benefit by the waters; for he is one of the best creatures ex-

isting; he's a downright parson Adams, in good-nature and simplicity.

*Miss Wal.* Lady Rachel will be quite happy at his return; and, it would be a laughable affair, if a match could be brought about between the old maid and the old batchelor.

*Capt. Sav.* Mr Torrington is too much taken up at Westminster-Hall, to think of paying his devoirs to the ladies, and too plain a speaker, I fancy, to be agreeable to lady Rachel.

*Bel.* You mistake the matter widely; she is deeply smitten with him; but honest Torrington is utterly unconscious of his conquest, and modestly thinks, that he has not a single attraction for any woman in the universe.

*Mrs Bel.* Yet, my poor aunt speaks sufficiently plain, in all conscience, to give him a different opinion of himself.

*Miss Wal.* Yes; and puts her charms into such repair, whenever she expects to meet him, that her cheeks look, for all the world, like a rasberry ice upon a ground of custard.

*Capt. Sav.* I thought Apollo was the only god of lady Rachel's idolatry; and that, in her passion for poetry, she had taken leave of all the less elevated affections.

*Bel.* O, you mistake again! the poets are eternally in love, and can by no means be calculated to describe the imaginary passions, without being very susceptible of the real ones.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* The man, madam, from Tavistock-street, has brought home the dresses for the masquerade, and desires to know, if there are any commands for him.

*Mrs Bel.* O! bid him stay till we see the dresses! [*Exit Servant.*

*Miss Wal.* They are only dominos.

*Bel.* I am glad of that; for characters are as difficult to be supported at the masquerade, as they are in real life. The last time I was at the Pantheon, a vestal virgin invited me to sup with her, and swore that her pocket had been picked by a justice of peace.

*Miss Wal.* Nay, that was not so bad as the Hamlet's ghost, that boxed with Henry the Eighth, and afterwards danced a hornpipe to the tune of Nancy Dawson! Ha, ha, ha!—We follow you, Mrs Belville. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* LEESON'S *chambers, in the temple.*

*Enter* LEESON.

*Lee.* Where is this clerk of mine? Connolly!

*Con.* [*Behind.*] Here, sir!

*Lee.* Have you copied the marriage-settlement, as I corrected it?

*Enter* CONNOLLY, *with pistols.*

*Con.* Ay, honey, an hour ago.

*Lee.* What! you have been trying those pistols?

*Con.* By my soul, I have been firing them this half hour, without once being able to make them go off.

*Lee.* They are plaguy dirty.

*Con.* In troth, so they are; I strove to brighten them up a little, but some misfortune attends every thing I do, for the more I clane them, the dirtier they are, honey.

*Lee.* You have had some of your usual daily visitors for money, I suppose?

*Con.* You may say that! and three or four of them are now hanging about the door, that I wish handsomely hanged any where else for bodering us.

*Lee.* No joking, Connolly! my present situation is a very disagreeable one.

*Con.* Faith, and so it is; but who makes it disagreeable? your aunt Tempest would let you have as much money as you please, but you won't condescend to be acquainted with her, though people in this country can be very intimate friends without seeing one another's faces for seven years.

*Lee.* Do you think me base enough to receive a favour from a woman, who has disgraced her family, and stoops to be a kept mistress? you see, my sister is already ruined by a connexion with her.

*Con.* Ah, sir, a good guinea is not the worse for coming through a bad hand! if it was, what would become of us lawyers? and, by my soul, many a high head in London would, at this minute, be very low, if they had not received favours even from much worse people than kept mistresses.

*Lee.* Others, Connolly, may prostitute their honour, as they please; mine is my chief possession, and I must take particular care of it.

*Con.* Honour, to be sure, is a very fine thing, sir; but I don't see how it is to be taken care of without a little money; your honour, to my knowledge, has not been in your own possession these two years; and the devil a crumb can you honestly swear by, till you get it out of the hands of your creditors.

*Lee.* I have given you a licence to talk, Connolly, because I know you are faithful: but I have not given you a liberty to sport with my misfortunes.

*Con.* You know I'd die to serve you, sir! but, of what use is your giving me leave to spake, if you oblige me to hould my tongue? 'tis out of pure love and affection that I put you in mind of your misfortunes.

*Lee.* Well, Connolly, a few days will, in all probability, enable me to redeem my honour, and to reward your fidelity; the lovely Emily, you know, has half consented to embrace the first opportunity of flying with me to Scotland, and the paltry trifles I owe, will not be missed in her fortune.

*Con.* But, dear sir, consider you are going to fight a duel this very evening, and if you should be kilt, I fancy you will find it a little difficult to run away afterwards with the lovely Emily!

*Lee.* If I fall, there will be an end to my misfortunes.

*Con.* But, surely, it will not be quite genteel, to go out of the world without paying your debts.

*Lee.* But how shall I stay in the world, Connolly, without punishing Belville for ruining my sister?

*Con.* O, the devil fly away with this honour! an ounce of common sense is worth a whole shipload of it, if we must prefer a bullet or a halter to a fine young lady and a great fortune!

*Lee.* We'll talk no more on the subject at present. Take this letter to Mr Belville; deliver it into his own hand, be sure; and bring me an answer: make haste, for I shall not stir out till you come back.

*Con.* By my soul, I wish you may be able to stir out then!—O, but that's true!

*Lee.* What's the matter?

*Con.* Why, sir, the gentleman I last lived clerk with, died lately, and left me a legacy of twenty guineas———

*Lee.* What! Is Mr Stanley dead?

*Con.* Faith, his friends have behaved very unkindly if he is not, for they have buried him these six weeks!

*Lee.* And what then?

*Con.* Why, sir, I received my little legacy this morning, and if you would be so good as to keep it for me, I would be much obliged to you.

*Lee.* Connolly, I understand you, but I am already shamefully in your debt; you have had no money from me this age———

*Con.* O, sir, that does not signify; if you are not kilt in this damned duel, you'll be able enough to pay me: if you are, I shan't want it.

*Lee.* Why so, my poor fellow?

*Con.* Because, though I am but your clerk, and though I think fighting the most foolish thing upon earth, I'm as much a gentleman as yourself, and have as much right to commit a murder in the way of duelling.

*Lee.* And what then? You have no quarrel with Mr Belville?

*Con.* I shall have a damned quarrel with him though, if you are kilt: your death shall be revenged, depend upon it; so, let that content you.

*Lee.* My dear Connolly, I hope I shan't want such a proof of your affection. How he distresses me!

*Con.* You will want a second, I suppose, in this affair? I stood second to my own brother in the Fifteen Acres; and, though that has made me detest the very thought of duelling ever since, yet, if you want a friend, I'll attend you to the field of death with a great deal of satisfaction.

*Lee.* I thank you, Connolly; but I think it extremely wrong in any man, who has a quarrel, to expose his friend to difficulties; we should not seek for redress, if we are not equal to the task of fighting our own battles; and I choose you particularly to carry my letter, because you may be supposed ignorant of the contents, and thought to be acting only in the ordinary course of your business.

*Con.* Say no more about it, honey; I will be back with you presently. [*Going, returns.*] I put the twenty guineas in your pocket, before you were up, sir; and I don't believe you would look for such a thing there, if I was not to tell you of it. [*Exit.*

*Lee.* This faithful, noble hearted creature!—but let me fly from thought; the business I have to execute will not bear the test of reflection. [*Exit.*

*Re-enter* CONNOLLY.

*Con.* As this is a challenge, I should not go without a sword; come down, little tickle-pitcher. [*Takes a sword.*] Some people may think me very conceited now; but as the dirtiest blacklegs in town can wear one without being stared at, I don't think it can suffer any disgrace by the side of an honest man. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to an apartment at* BELVILLE'S.

*Enter* MRS BELVILLE.

*Mrs Bel.* How strangely this affair of Mrs Tempest hangs upon my spirits, though I have every reason, from the tenderness, the politeness, and the generosity of Mrs Belville, as well as from the woman's behaviour, to believe the whole charge the result of a disturbed imagination. Yet, suppose it should be actually true:—Heigho! well, suppose it should; I would endeavour—I think I would endeavour to keep my temper: a frowning face never recovered a heart, that was not to be fixed with a smiling one: but women, in general, forget this grand article of the matrimonial creed entirely; the dignity of insulted virtue obliges them to play the fool, whenever their Corydons play the libertine; and poh! they must pull down the house about the traitor's ears, though they are themselves to be crushed in pieces by the ruins.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* Lady Rachel Mildew, madam. [*Exit Servant.*

*Enter* LADY RACHAEL MILDEW.

*Lady Rach.* My dear, how have you done since the little eternity of my last seeing you?—Mr Torrington is come to town, I hear.

*Mrs Bel.* He is, and must be greatly flattered to find, that your ladyship has made him the hero of your new comedy.

*Lady Rach.* Yes, I have drawn him, as he is, an honest practitioner of the law; which is, I fancy, no very common character.

*Mrs Bell.* And it must be a vast acquisition to the theatre?

*Lady Rach.* Yet the managers of both houses have refused my play; have refused it peremptorily, though I offered to make them a present of it!

*Mrs Bel.* That's very surprising, when you offered to make them a present of it.

*Lady Rach.* They alledge, that the audiences are tired of crying at comedies; and insist that my despairing shepherdess is absolutely too dismal for representation.

*Mrs Bel.* What! though you have introduced a lawyer in a new light?

*Lady Rach.* Yes, and have a boarding-school romp, that slaps her mother's face, and throws a bason of scalding water at her governess.

*Mrs Bel.* Why surely these are capital jokes!

*Lady Rach.* But the managers can't find them out. However, I am determined to bring it out somewhere; and I have discovered such a treasure for my boarding-school romp, as exceeds the most sanguine expectation of criticism.

*Mrs Bel.* How fortunate!

*Lady Rach.* Going to Mrs Le Blond, my milliner's, this morning, to see some contraband silks (for you know there's a foreign minister just arrived), I heard a loud voice rehearsing Juliet from the dining-room; and, upon inquiry, found, that it was a country girl just eloped from her friends in town, to go upon the stage with an Irish manager.

*Mrs Bel.* Ten to one the strange woman's niece, who has been here this morning.

[*Aside.*

*Lady Rach.* Mrs Le Blond has some doubts about the manager, it seems, though she has not seen him yet, because the apartments are very expensive, and were taken by a fine gentleman out of livery.

*Mrs Bel.* What am I to think of this? Pray, lady Rachel, as you have conversed with this young actress, I suppose you could procure me a sight of her?

*Lady Rach.* This moment, if you will. I am very intimate with her already; but pray keep the matter a secret from your husband, for he is so witty, you know, upon my passion for the drama, that I shall be teased to death by him.

*Mrs Bel.* O, you may be very sure, that your secret is safe, for I have a most particular reason to keep it from Mr Belville; but he is coming this way with Captain Savage: let us, at present, avoid him. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter* BELVILLE *and* CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

*Capt. Sav.* You are a very strange man, Belville; you are for ever tremblingly solicitous about the happiness of your wife, yet for ever endangering it by your passion for variety.

*Bel.* Why, there is certainly a contradiction between my principles and my practice; but, if ever you marry, you'll be able to reconcile it perfectly. Possession, Savage! O, possession, is a miserable whetter of the appetite in love! and I own myself so sad a fellow, that, though I would not exchange Mrs Belville's mind for any woman's upon earth, there is scarcely a woman's person upon earth, which is not to me a stronger object of attraction.

*Capt. Sav.* Then, perhaps, in a little time you'll be weary of Miss Leeson?

*Bel.* To be sure I shall; though, to own the truth, I have not yet carried my point conclusively with the little monkey.

*Capt. Sav.* Why, how the plague has she escaped a moment in your hands?

*Bel.* By a mere accident. She came to the lodgings, which my man Spruce prepared for her, rather unexpectedly last night, so that I happened to be engaged particularly in another quarter —you understand me?—— and the damned aunt found me so much employment all the morning, that I could only send a message by Spruce, promising to call upon her the first moment I had to spare in the course of the day.

*Capt. Sav.* And so you are previously satisfied that you shall be tired of her?

*Bel.* Tired of her? Why, I am, at this moment, in pursuit of fresh game, against the hour of satiety: game, that you know to be exquisite: and I fancy I shall bring it down, though it is closely guarded by a deal of that pride, which passes for virtue with the generality of your mighty good people.

*Capt. Sav.* Indeed! and may a body know this wonder?

*Bel.* You are to be trusted with any thing, for you are the closest fellow I ever knew, and the the rack itself would hardly make you discover one of your own secrets to any body—What do you think of Miss Walsingham?

*Capt. Sav.* Miss Walsingham! Death and the devil! [*Aside.*

*Bel.* Miss Walsingham.

*Capt. Sav.* Why surely she has not received your addresses with any degree of approbation?

*Bel.* With every degree of approbation I could expect.

*Capt. Sav.* She has?

*Bel.* Ay: why this news surprises you?

*Capt. Sav.* It does, indeed!

*Bel.* Ha, ha, ha! I can't help laughing to think what a happy dog Miss Walsingham's husband is likely to be!

*Capt. Sav.* A very happy dog, truly!

*Bel.* She's a delicious girl, isn't she, Savage? but she'll require a little more trouble; for a fine woman, like a fortified town, to speak in your father's language, demands a regular siege; and

we must even allow her the honours of war, to magnify the greatness of our own victory.

*Capt Sav.* Well, it amazes me how you gay fellows ever have the presumption to attack a woman of principle. Miss Walsingham has no apparent levity of any kind about her.

*Bel.* No; but she has continued in my house after I had whispered my passion in her ear, and gave me a second opportunity of addressing her improperly. What greater encouragement could I desire?

*Enter* SPRUCE.

Well, Spruce, what are your commands?

*Spruce.* My lady is just gone out with lady Rachel, sir.

*Bel.* I understand you.

*Spruce.* I believe you do. [*Aside.*] [*Exit.*

*Capt. Sav.* What is the English of these significant looks between Spruce and you?

*Bel.* Only that Miss Walsingham is left alone, and that I have now an opportunity of entertaining her. You must excuse me, Savage; you must, upon my soul; but not a word of this affair to any body; because, when I shake her off my hands, there may be fools enough to think of her upon terms of honourable matrimony.

[*Exit.*

*Capt. Sav.* So, here's a discovery! a precious discovery! and while I have been racking my imagination, and sacrificing my interest, to promote the happiness of this woman, she has been listening to the addresses of another! to the addresses of a married man! the husband of her friend, and the intimate friend of her intended husband! By Belville's own account, however, she has not yet proceeded to any criminal lengths —But why did she keep the affair a secret from me? or why did she continue in his house, after a repeated declaration of his unwarrantable attachment? What's to be done? If I open my engagement with her to Belville, I am sure he will instantly desist; but, then, her honour is left in a state extremely questionable——It shall be still concealed. While it remains unknown, Belville will himself tell me every thing; and doubt, upon an occasion of this nature, is infinitely more insupportable than the downright falsehood of the woman whom we love. [*Exit.*

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in* GENERAL SAVAGE'S *house.*

*Enter* GENERAL SAVAGE *and* TORRINGTON.

*Gen. Sav.* ZOUNDS! Torrington, give me quarter, when I surrender up my sword. I own that, for these twenty years, I have been suffering all the inconveniencies of marriage, without tasting any one of its comforts, and rejoicing in an imaginary freedom, while I was really grovelling in chains.

*Tor.* In the dirtiest chains upon earth;—yet you wou'dn't be convinced, but laughed at all your married acquaintance as slaves, when not one of them put up with half so much from the worst wife, as you were obliged to crouch under from a kept mistress.

*Gen. Sav.* 'Tis too true. But you know she sacrificed much for me;—you know that she was the widow of a colonel, and refused two very advantageous matches on my account.——

*Tor.* If she was the widow of a judge, and had refused a high chancellor, she was still a devil incarnate, and you were in course a madman to live with her.

*Gen. Sav.* You don't remember her care of me when I have been sick.

*Tor.* I recollect, however, her usage of you in health, and you may easily find a tenderer nurse, when you are bound over by the gout or the rheumatism.

*Gen. Sav.* Well, well, I agree with you that she is a devil incarnate; but I am this day determined to part with her for ever.

*Tor.* Not you indeed.

*Gen. Sav.* What, don't I know my own mind?

*Tor.* Not you indeed, when she is in the question: with every body else, your resolution is as unalterable as a determination in the house of peers; but Mrs Tempest is your fate, and she reverses your decrees with as little difficulty as a fraudulent debtor now-a-days procures his certificate under a commission of bankruptcy.

*Gen. Sen.* Well, if, like the Roman Fabius, I conquer by delay, in the end there will be no great reason to find fault with my generalship. The proposal of parting now comes from herself.

*Tor.* O, you daren't make it for the life of you!

*Gen. Sav.* You must know, that this morning we had a smart cannonading on Belville's account; and she threatens, as I told you before, to quit my house, if I don't challenge him for taking away her niece.

*Tor.* That fellow is the very devil among the women! and yet there isn't a man in England fonder of his wife.

*Gen. Sav.* Poh, if the young minx hadn't surrendered to him, she would have capitulated to somebody else; and I shall at this time be doubly obliged to him, if he is any ways instrumental in getting the aunt off my hands.

*Tor.* Why at this time?

*Gen. Sav.* Because, to shew you how fixed my resolution is to be a keeper no longer, I mean to marry immediately.

*Tor.* And can't you avoid being pressed to

death, like a felon, who refuses to plead, without incurring a sentence of perpetual imprisonment?

*Gen. Sav.* I fancy you would yourself have no objection to a perpetual imprisonment in the arms of Miss Walsingham?

*Tor.* But have you any reason to think, that, upon examination in a case of love, she would give a favourable reply to your interrogatories?

*Gen. Sav.* The greatest—do you think I'd hazard such an engagement, without being perfectly sure of my ground? Notwithstanding my present connection won't suffer me to see a modest woman at my own house—she always treats me with particular attention, whenever I visit at Belville's, or meet her any where else—If fifty young fellows are present, she directs all her assiduities to the old soldier, and my son has a thousand times told me, that she professes the highest opinion of my understanding.

*Tor.* And truly you give a notable proof of your understanding, in thinking of a woman almost young enough to be your grand daughter.

*Gen. Sav.* Nothing like an experienced chief to command in any garrison.

*Tor.* Recollect the state of your present citadel.

*Gen. Sav.* Well, if I am blown up by my own mine, I shall be the only sufferer—There's another thing I want to talk of; I am going to marry my son to Miss Moreland.

*Tor.* Miss Moreland!—

*Gen. Sav.* Belville's sister.

*Tor.* O, ay, I remember, that Moreland had got a good estate to assume the name of Belville.

*Gen. Sav.* I haven't yet mentioned the matter to my son; but I settled the affair with the girl's mother yesterday, and she only waits to communicate it to Belville, who is her oracle, you know.

*Tor.* And are you sure the captain will like her?

*Gen. Sav.* I am not so unreasonable as to insist upon his liking her; I shall only insist upon his marrying her.

*Tar.* What, whether he likes her or not?

*Gen. Sav.* When I issue my orders, I expect them to be obeyed; and don't look for an examination into their propriety.

*Tor.* What a delightful thing it must be to live under a military government, where a man is not to be troubled with the exercise of his understanding!

*Gen. Sav.* Miss Moreland has thirty thousand pounds——That's a large sum of ammunition-money.

*Tor.* Ay, but a marriage merely on the score of fortune, is only gilding the death-warrant sent down for the execution of a prisoner. However, as I know your obstinate attachment to what you once resolve, I sha'n't pretend to argue with you. Where are the papers which you want me to consider?

*Gen. Sav.* They are in my library—File off with me to the next room, and they shall be laid before you—But first I'll order the chariot; for the moment I have your opinion, I purpose to sit down regularly before Miss Walsingham—Who waits there?

*Enter a Servant.*

*Gen. Sav.* Is Mrs Tempest at home?

*Ser.* Yes, sir, just come in, and just going out again.

*Gen. Sav.* Very well; order the chariot to be got ready.

*Ser.* Sir, one of the pannels was broke last night at the opera-house.

*Gen. Sav.* Sir, I didn't call you to have the pleasure of your conversation, but to have obedience paid to my orders.

*Tor.* Go, order the chariot, you blockhead!

*Ser.* With the broken pannel, sir?

*Gen. Sav.* Yes, you rascal! if both pannels were broke, and the back shattered to pieces.

*Ser.* The coachman thinks that one of the wheels is damaged, sir.

*Gen. Sav.* Don't attempt to reason, you dog, but execute your orders.——Bring the chariot without the wheels, if you cann't bring it with them.

*Tor.* Ay, bring it, if you reduce it to a sledge, and let your master look like a malefactor for high treason, on his journey to Tyburn.

*Enter* MRS TEMPEST.

*Mrs Tem.* General Savage, is the house to be for ever a scene of noise with your domineering?—The chariot shan't be brought—it won't be fit for use 'till it is repaired—and John shall drive it this very minute to the coach maker's.

*Gen. Sav.* Nay, my dear, if it isn't fit for use, that's another thing.

*Tor.* Here's the experienced chief, that's fit to command in any garrison! [*Aside.*

*Gen. Sav.* Go, order me the coach then. [*To the Servant.*

*Mrs Temp.* You can't have the coach.

*Gen. Sav.* And why so, my love?

*Mrs Tem.* Because I want it for myself.——Robert, get a hack for your master—though, indeed, I don't see what business he has out of the house. [*Exeunt* MRS TEMPEST *and Servant.*

*Tor.* When you issue orders, you expect them to be obeyed, and don't look for an examination into their propriety.

*Gen. Sav.* The fury——this has steeled me against her for ever, and nothing on earth can now prevent me from drumming her out immediately.

*Mrs Tem.* [*Behind.*] An unreasonable old

fool—But I'll make him know who governs this house!

*Gen. Sav.* Zounds! here she comes again! she has been lying in ambuscade, I suppose, and has overheard us.

*Tor.* What if she has? you are steeled against her for ever.

*Gen. Sav.* No, she's not coming—she's going down stairs—and now, dear Torrington, you must be as silent as a centinel on an out-post about this affair. If that virago was to hear a syllable of it, she might perhaps attack Miss Walsingham in her very camp, and defeat my whole plan of operations.

*Tor.* I thought you were determined to drum her out immediately! [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* BELVILLE'S.

*Enter* MISS WALSINGHAM, *followed by* BELVILLE.

*Miss Wal.* I beg, sir, that you will insult me no longer with your solicitations of this nature—Give me proofs of your sincerity indeed! What proofs of your sincerity can your situation admit of, if I could be even weak enough to think of you with partiality at all?

*Bel.* If our affections, madam, were under the government of our reason, circumstanced as I am, this unhappy bosom wouldn't be torn by passion for Miss Walsingham——Had I been blessed with your acquaintance before I saw Mrs Belville, my hand, as well as my heart, would have been humbly offered to your acceptance—fate, however, has ordered it otherwise, and it is cruel to reproach me with that situation as a crime, which ought to be pitied as my greatest misfortune.

*Miss Wal.* He's actually forcing tears into his eyes—However, I'll mortify him severely. [*Aside.*

*Bel.* But such proofs of sincerity as my situation can admit of, you shall yourself command, as my only business in existence is to adore you.

*Miss Wal.* His only business in existence to adore me! [*Aside.*

*Bel.* Prostrate at your feet, my dearest Miss Walsingham [*Kneeling.*], behold a heart eternally devoted to your service—You have too much good sense, madam, to be the slave of custom, and too much humanity not to pity the wretchedness you have caused—Only, therefore, say that you commiserate my sufferings—I'll ask no more—and surely that may be said, without any injury to your purity, to snatch even an enemy from distraction—where's my handkerchief? [*Aside.*

*Miss Wal.* Now, to answer in his own way, and to make him ridiculous to himself. [*Aside.*] If I thought, if I could think [*Affecting to weep.*] that these protestations were real!

*Bel.* How can you, madam, be so unjust to your own merit? how can you be so cruelly doubtful of my solemn asseverations?—Here I again kneel, and swear eternal love!

*Miss Wal.* I don't know what to say—but there is one proof—[*Affecting to weep.*]

*Bel.* Name it, my angel, this moment, and make me the happiest of mankind!

*Miss Wal.* Swear to be mine for ever.

*Bel.* I have sworn it a thousand times, my charmer! and I will swear it to the last moment of my life.

*Miss Wal.* Why then—but don't look at me, I beseech you—I don't know how to speak it—

*Bel.* The delicious emotion!—do not check the generous tide of tenderness, that fills me with such ecstacy.

*Miss Wal.* You'll despise me for this weakness.

*Bel.* This weakness—this generosity, which will demand my everlasting gratitude.

*Miss Wal.* I am a fool—but there is a kind of fatality in this affair—and I do consent to go off with you.

*Bel.* Eternal blessings on your condescension!

*Miss Wal.* You are irresistible, and I am ready to fly with you to any part of the world.

*Bel.* Fly to any part of the world indeed—you shall fly by yourself then! [*Aside.*] You are the most lovely, the most tender creature in the world, and thus again let me thank you: O, Miss Walsingham! I cannot express how happy you've made me!—But where's the necessity of our leaving England?

*Miss Wal.* I thought he wou'dn't like to go abroad. [*Aside.*] That I may possess the pleasure of your company unrivalled.

*Bel.* I must cure her of this taste for travelling— [*Aside.*

*Miss Wal.* You don't answer me, Mr Belville?

*Bel.* Why I was turning the consequence of your proposal in my thoughts, as going off—going off—you know——

*Miss Wal.* Why, going off, you know, is going off—And what objection can you have to going off?

*Bel.* Why, going off will subject you at a certainty to the slander of the world; whereas, by staying at home, we may not only have numberless opportunities of meeting, but, at the same time, prevent suspicion itself from ever breathing on your reputation.

*Miss Wal.* I didn't dream of your starting any difficulties, sir—Just now, I was dearer to you than all the world.

*Bel.* And so you are, by Heaven!

*Miss Wal.* Why won't you sacrifice the world then at once to obtain me?

*Pel.* Surely, my dearest life, you must know the necessity, which every man of honour is under, of keeping up his character?

*Miss Wal.* So, here's this fellow swearing to

ten thousand lies, and yet talking very gravely about his honour, and his character! [*Aside.*] Why, to be sure, in these days, Mr Belville, the instances of conjugal infidelity are so very scarce, and men of fashion are so remarkable for a tender attachment to their wives, that I don't wonder at your circumspection—But do you think I can stoop to accept you by halves, or admit of any partnership in your heart?

*Bel.* O, you must do more than that, if you have any thing to say to me. [*Aside.*] Surely, madam, when you know my whole soul unalterably your own, you will permit me to preserve those appearances with the world, which are indispensibly requisite—Mrs Belville is a most excellent woman: however, it may be my fortune to be devoted to another—Her happiness, besides, constitutes a principal part of my felicity; and if I was publicly to forsake her, I should be hunted as a monster from society.

*Miss Wal.* Then, I suppose, it is by way of promoting Mrs Belville's repose, sir, that you make love to other women; and by way of shewing the nicety of your honour, that you attempt the the purity of such as your own roof peculiarly entitles to protection. For the honour intended to me—thus low to the ground let me thank you, Mr Belville.

*Bel.* Laughed at, by all the stings of mortification!

*Miss Wal.* Good bye—Don't let this accident mortify your vanity too much—but take care, the next time you vow eternal love, that the object is neither tender enough to sob—sob—at your distress; nor provoking enough to make a proposal of leaving England—How greatly a little common sense can lower these fellows of extraordinary impudence!

[*Exit* MISS WALSINGHAM.

*Bel.* So, then, I am fairly taken in, and she has been only diverting herself with me all this time—however, lady fair, I may chance to have the laugh in a little time on my side; for if you can sport in this manner about the flame, I think it must, in the run, lay hold of your wings—what shall I do in this affair?—she sees the matter in its true light, and there's no good to be expected from thumping of bosoms, or squeezing white handkerchiefs—No, these won't do with women of sense; and, in a short time, they'll be ridiculous to the very babies of a boarding school.

*Enter* CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

*Capt. Sav.* Well, Belville, what news? You have had a fresh opportunity with Miss Walsingham.

*Bel.* Why, faith, Savage, I've had a most extraordinary scene with her, and yet have but little reason to brag of my good fortune, though she offered, in express terms, to run away with me.

*Capt. Sav.* Prithee explain yourself, man; she cou'dn't surely be so shameless!

*Bel.* O, her offering to run away with me was by no means the worst part of the affair.

*Capt. Sav.* No! then it must be damned bad indeed! but prithee hurry to an explanation.

*Bel.* Why, then, the worst part of the affair is, that she was laughing at me the whole time; and made this proposal of an elopement, with no other view, than to shew me in strong colours to myself, as a very dirty fellow to the best wife in England.

*Capt. Sav.* I am very easy. [*Aside.*

*Enter* SPRUCE.

*Spruce.* Sir, there is an Irish gentleman below with a letter for you, who will deliver it to nobody but yourself.

*Bel.* Shew him up, then.

*Spruce.* Yes, sir.

*Capt. Sav.* It may be on business, Belville; I'll take my leave of you.

*Bel.* O, by no means; I can have no business which I desire to keep from you, though you are the arrantest miser of your confidence upon earth, and would rather trust your life in any body's hands, than even a paltry amour with the apprentice of a milliner.

*Enter* CONNOLLY.

*Con.* Gintlemin, your most obedient! pray, which of you is Mr Belville?

*Bel.* My name is Belville, at your service, sir.

*Con.* I have a little bit of a letter for you, sir.

*Bel.* [*Reads.*]

'SIR,

'The people where Miss Leeson lately lodged, 'asserting positively that you have taken her 'away in a fictitious character, the brother of 'that unhappy girl thinks himself obliged to de'mand satisfaction for the injury you have done 'his family. Though a stranger to your person, 'he is sufficiently acquainted with your reputation 'for spirit, and shall, therefore, make no doubt 'of seeing you with a case of pistols, near the 'ring in Hyde Park, at eight o'clock this evening,' 'to answer the claims of GEORGE LEESON.

'*To* CRAGGS BELVILLE, *Esq.*

*Capt. Sav.* Eight o'clock in the evening! 'tis a strange time!

*Con.* Why so, honey? A fine evening is as good a time for a bad action as a fine morning; and, if a man of sense can be such a fool as to fight a duel, he should never sleep upon the matter; for, the more he thinks of it, the more he must feel himself ashamed of his resolution.

*Bel.* A pretty letter!

*Con.* O yes; an invitation to a brace of bullets is a very pretty thing!

*Bel.* For a challenge, however, 'tis very civilly written.

*Con.* Faith, if it was written to me, I should not be very fond of such civility! I wonder he does not sign himself, your most obedient servant!

*Capt. Sav.* I told you Leeson's character, and what would become of this damned business! but your affairs—are they settled, Belville?

*Bel.* O, they are always settled!—for, as this is a country where people occasionally die, I take constant care to be prepared for contingencies.

*Con.* Occasionally die!—I'll be very much obliged to you, sir, if you will tell me the country where people do not die? for I'll immediately go and end my days there!

*Bel.* Ha, ha, ha!

*Con.* Faith, you may laugh, gintlemin! but, though I am a foolish Irishman, and come about a foolish piece of business, I'd prefer a snug birth in this world, bad as it is, to the finest coffin in all Christendom!

*Bel.* I am surprised, sir, that, thinking, in this manner, you would be the bearer of a challenge!

*Con.* And well you may, sir!—But we must often take a pleasure in serving our friends, by doing things that are very disagreeable to us.

*Capt. Sav.* Then, you think Mr Leeson much to blame, perhaps, for hazarding his life where he can by no means repair the honour of his sister.

*Con.* Indeed, and I do—But, I shall think this gintlemin, begging his pardon, much more to blame for meeting him!

*Bel.* And, why so, sir?—You would not have me disappoint your friend?

*Con.* Faith, and that I would!—He, poor lad, may have some reason at present to be tired of the world; but, you have a fine estate, a fine wife, a fine parcel of children!—In short, honey, you have every thing to make you fond of living: and, the devil burn me, was I in your case, if I'd stake my own happiness against the misery of any man.

*Bel.* I am very much obliged to your advice, sir; though, on the present occasion, I cannot adopt it: be so good as to present my compliments to your friend, and tell him, I will certainly do myself the honour of attending his appointment.

*Con.* Why, then, upon my soul, I am very sorry for it.

*Capt. Sav.* 'Tis not very customary, sir, with gentlemen of Ireland to oppose an affair of honour.

*Con.* They are like the gintlemin of England, sir; they are brave to a fault; yet, I hope to see the day that it will be infamous to draw the swords of either against any body but the enemies of their country. [*Exit* CON.

*Bel.* I am quite charmed with this honest Hibernian; and would almost fight a duel for the pleasure of his acquaintance.

*Capt. Sav.* Come, step with me a little, and let us consider, whether there may not be some method of accommodating this cursed business.

*Bel.* Poh! don't be uneasy upon my account; my character, with regard to affairs of this nature, is unhappily too well established; and you may be sure that I shan't fight with Leeson.

*Capt. Sav.* No!——You have injured him greatly.

*Bel.* The very reason, of all others, why I should not cut his throat. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter* SPRUCE.

*Spruce.* What! the devil, this master of mine has got a duel upon his hands! Zounds! I am sorry for that; he is a prince of a fellow! and a good subject must always love his prince, though he may now and then be a little out of humour with his actions.

*Enter* GENERAL SAVAGE.

*Gen. Sav.* Your hall-door standing open, Spruce, and none of your sentinels being on guard, I have surprised your camp thus far, without resistance. Where is your master?

*Spruce.* Just gone out with captain Savage, sir.

*Gen. Sav.* Is your lady at home?

*Spruce.* No, sir, but Miss Walsingham is at home; shall I inform her of your visit?

*Gen. Sav.* There is no occasion to inform her of it, for here she is, Spruce. [*Exit* SPRUCE.

*Enter* MISS WALSINGHAM.

*Miss Wal.* General Savage, your most humble servant!

*Gen. Sav.* My dear Miss Walsingham, it is rather cruel, that you should be left at home by yourself, and yet; I am greatly rejoiced to find you at present without company.

*Miss Wal.* I can't but think myself in the best company, when I have the honour of your conversation, general.

*Gen. Sav.* You flatter me too much, madam: yet, I am come to talk with you on a serious affair, Miss Walsingham; an affair of importance to me, and to yourself:——Have you leisure to favour me with a short audience, if I beat a parley?

*Miss Wal.* Any thing of importance to you, sir, is always sufficient to command my leisure. ——'Tis as the captain suspected. [*Aside.*

*Gen. Sav.* You tremble, my lovely girl; but don't be alarmed; for, though my business is of an important nature, I hope it won't be of a disagreeable one.

*Miss Wal.* And yet I am greatly agitated! [*Aside.*

*Gen. Sav.* Soldiers, Miss Walsingham, are said to be generally favoured by the kind partiality of the ladies!

*Miss Wal.* The ladies are not without grati-

tude, sir, to those who devote their lives peculiarly to the service of their country!

*Gen. Sav.* Generously said, madam! Then, give me leave, without any masked battery, to ask, if the heart of an honest soldier is a prize at all worth your acceptance?

*Miss Wal.* Upon my word, sir, there's no masked battery in this question.

*Gen. Sav.* I am as fond of a coup-de-main, madam, in love, as in war; and hate the tedious method of sapping a town, when there is a possibility of entering sword in hand!

*Miss Wal.* Why, really, sir, a woman may as well know her own mind, when she is summoned by the trumpet of a lover, as when she undergoes all the tiresome formality of a siege. You see I have caught your own mode of conversing, general.

*Gen. Sav.* And a very great compliment I consider it, madam: But, now that you have candidly confessed an acquaintance with your own mind, answer me with that frankness for which every body admires you so much, Have you any objection to change the name of Walsingham?

*Miss Wal.* Why, then, frankly, general Savage, I say, no.

*Gen. Sav.* Ten thousand thanks to you for this kind declaration.

*Miss Wal.* I hope you won't think it a forward one?

*Gen. Sav.* I'd sooner see my son run away in the day of battle—I'd sooner think lord Russel was bribed by Lewis the XIVth, and sooner villify the memory of Algernon Sydney.

*Miss Wal.* How unjust it was ever to suppose the general a tyrannical father! [*Aside.*

*Gen. Sav.* You have told me condescendingly, Miss Walsingham, that you have no objection to change your name; I have but one question more to ask.

*Miss Wal.* Pray, propose it.

*Gen. Sav.* Would the name of Savage be disagreeable to you?—Speak frankly again, my dear girl!

*Miss Wal.* Why, then, again I frankly say, no.

*Gen. Sav.* You make me too happy! and though I shall readily own, that a proposal of this nature would come with more propriety from my son———

*Miss Wal.* I am much better pleased that you make the proposal yourself, sir.

*Gen. Sav.* You are too good to me.—Torrington thought that I should meet with a repulse. [*Aside.*

*Miss Wal.* Have you communicated this business to the captain, sir?

*Gen. Sav.* No, my dear madam, I did not think that at all necessary. I have always been attentive to the captain's happiness, and I propose, that he shall be married in a few days.

*Miss Wal.* What, whether I will or no?

*Gen. Sav.* O, you can have no objection.

*Miss Wal.* I must be consulted, however, about the day, general: but nothing in my power shall be wanting to make him happy.

*Gen Sav.* Obliging loveliness!

*Miss Wal.* You may imagine, that, if I was not previously impress in favour of your proposal, it would not have met my concurrence so readily.

*Gen. Sav.* Then you own, that I had a previous friend in the garrison?

*Miss Wal.* I don't blush to acknowledge it, when I consider the accomplishments of the object, sir.

*Gen. Sav.* O, this is too much, madam! the principal merit of the object is his passion for Miss Walsingham.

*Miss Wal.* Don't say that, general, I beg of you; for I don't think there are many women in the kingdom, who could behold him with indifference.

*Gen. Sav.* Ah, you flattering, flattering angel! —and yet, by the memory of Marlborough, my lovely girl, it was the idea of a prepossession on your part, which encouraged me to hope for a favourable reception.

*Miss Wal.* Then I must have been very indiscreet, for I laboured to conceal that prepossession as much as possible.

*Gen. Sav.* You couldn't conceal it from me! you couldn't conceal it from me!—The female heart is a field which I am thoroughly acquainted with, and which has, more than once, been a witness to my victories, madam.

*Miss Wal.* I don't at all doubt your success with the ladies, general; but, as we now understand one another so perfectly, you will give me leave to retire.

*Gen. Sav.* One word, my dear creature, and no more; I shall wait upon you some time today, with Mr Torrington, about the necessary settlements.

*Miss Wal.* You must do as you please, general; you are invincible in every thing.

*Gen. Sav.* And, if you please, we'll keep every thing a profound secret, till the articles are all settled, and the definite treaty ready for execution.

*Miss Wal.* You may be sure, that delicacy will not suffer me to be communicative on the subject, sir.

*Gen. Sav.* Then leave every thing to my management.

*Miss Wal.* I can't trust a more noble negociator. [*Exit.*

*Gen. Sav.* The day's my own. [*Sings.*

*Britons, strike home! strike home! Revenge, &c.*
[*Exit singing.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.—MISS LEESON'S *lodgings.*

*Enter* LADY RACHEL MILDEW, MRS BELVILLE, *and* MISS LEESON.

*Lady Rach.* WELL, Mrs Belville, I am extremely glad you agree with me in opinion of this young lady's qualifications for the stage. Don't you think she'd play Miss Headstrong admirably in my comedy?

*Mrs Bel.* Yes, indeed, I think she possesses a natural fund of spirit, very much adapted to the character.—'Tis impossible, surely, that this boyden can have a moment's attraction for Mr Belville! [*Aside.*

*Miss Lee.* You are very obliging, ladies; but I have no turn for comedy; my forte is tragedy intirely.

'Alphonso! O Alphonso! to thee I call,' &c.

*Lady Rach.* But, my dear, is there none of our comedies to your taste?

*Miss Lee.* O, yes; some of the sentimental ones are very pretty, there's such little difference between them and tragedies.

*Lady Rach.* And pray, my dear, how long have you been engaged to Mr Frankly?

*Miss Lee.* I only came away last night, and hav'n't seen Mr Frankly since, though I expect him every moment.

*Mrs Bel.* Last night! just as Mrs Tempest mentioned. [*Aside.*

*Lady Rach.* You had the concurrence of your friends?

*Miss Lee.* Not I, madam; Mr Frankly said, I had too much genius to mind my friends, and as I should want nothing from them, there was no occasion to consult them in the affair.

*Lady Rach.* Then Osbaldiston is not your real name, perhaps?

*Miss Lee.* O no; nor do I tell my real name: I chose Osbaldiston, because it was a long one, and would make a striking appearance in the bills.

*Mrs Bel.* I wish we could see Mr Frankly.

*Miss Lee.* Perhaps you may, madam, for he designs to give me a lesson every day, 'till we are ready to set off for Ireland.

*Lady Rach.* Suppose then, my dear, you would oblige us with a scene in Juliet, by way of shewing your proficiency to Mrs Belville.

*Miss Lee.* Will you stand up for Romeo?

*Lady Rach.* With all my heart, and I'll give you some instructions.

*Miss Lee.* I beg pardon, madam; I'll learn to act under nobody but Mr Frankly. This room is without a carpet; if you will step into the next, ladies, I'll endeavour to oblige you.

'Shall I not be environed, distraught'——

This way, ladies.

*Lady Rach.* Pray, madam, shew us the way.

[*Exeunt* MISS LEESON *and* LADY RACHEL.

*Mrs Bel.* I'll prolong this mummery as much as possible, in hopes the manager may come. Lie still, poor fluttering heart! it cannot be the lord of all your wishes! it cannot, surely, be your adored Belville! [*Exit.*

*Re-enter* MISS LEESON.

*Miss Lee.* Hav'n't I left my Romeo and Juliet here? O yes, there it is.

*Enter* BELVILLE.

*Bel.* ——'O, were those eyes in heaven,
'They'd through the starry region shine so bright,
'That birds would sing, and think it was the morn!'

*Miss Lee.* Ah, my dear Mr Frankly! I'm so glad you are come! I was dying to see you.

*Bel.* Kiss me, my dear—why did'nt you send me word of your intention to come away last night?

*Miss Lee.* I hadn't time: but as I knew where the lodgings were, I thought I should be able to find you by a note to the coffee-house I always directed to.

*Bel.* Kiss me again, my little sparkler!

*Miss Lee.* Nay, I won't be kissed in this manner! for, though I am going on the stage, I intend to have some regard for my character. But, ha, ha, ha! I am glad you are come now: I have company above stairs.

*Bel.* Company! that's unlucky at this time, for I wanted to make you entirely easy about your character. [*Aside.*]——And pray, my dear, who is your company? You know we must be very cautious, for fear of your relations.

*Miss Lee.* O, they are only ladies. But one of them is the most beautiful creature in the world!

*Bel.* The devil she is!

*Miss Lee.* 'An earth-treading star, and makes dim heaven's light.'

*Bel.* Zounds! I'll take a peep at the star; who knows but I may have an opportunity of making another actress? [*Aside.*

*Miss Lee.* Come, charmer! charmer!

*Bel.* ——'Wert thou as far,
'As that vast shore, washed by the farthest sea,
'I would adventure for such merchandise.'
Now let's see what fortune has sent us above stairs. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to a dining-room at* MISS LEESON'S.

MRS BELVILLE *and* LADY RACHEL *discovered.*

*Mrs Bel.* This is a most ignorant young creature, Lady Rachel.

*Lady Rach.* Why, I think she is——did you observe how she slighted my offer of instructing her?

*Enter* MISS LEESON.

*Miss Lee.* Ladies! ladies! here he is! here is Mr Frankly!

*Enter* BELVILLE *bowing very low, and not seeing the ladies.*

*Bel.* Ladies, your most obedient.

*Mrs Bel.* Let me, if possible, recollect myself—Sir, your most obedient humble servant.

*Bel.* Zounds! let me out of the house!

*Lady Rach.* What do I see?

*Miss Lee.* You seem, ladies, to know this gentleman?

*Mrs Bel.* [*Taking hold of him.*] You shan't go, renegade——You laughed at my credulity this morning, and I must now laugh at your embarrassment.

*Bel.* What a kind thing it would be in any body to blow out my stupid brains!

*Lady Rach.* I'll mark this down for an incident in my comedy.

*Miss Lee.* What do you hang your head for, Mr Frankly?

*Bel.* Be so good as to ask that lady, my dear. The devil has been long in my debt, and now he pays me home with a witness.

*Mrs Bel.* What a cruel thing it is to let Mrs Tempest out, my love, without somebody to take care of her!

*Miss Lee.* What, do you know Mrs Tempest, madam?

*Mrs Bel.* Yes, my dear——and I am pretty well acquainted with this gentleman.

*Miss Lee.* What, isn't this gentleman the manager of a play-house in Ireland?

*Bel.* The curtain is almost dropt, my dear; the farce is nearly over, and you'll be speedily acquainted with the catastrophe.

*Enter* MRS TEMPEST.

*Mrs Tem.* Yes, sir, the curtain is almost dropt: I have had spies to watch your haunts, and the catastrophe ends in your detection———Come, you abandoned slut———

*Miss Lee.* And have I eloped after all, without being brought upon the stage?

*Mrs Tem.* I don't know, that you would be brought upon the stage; but I am sure you were near being brought upon the town. I hope, madam, for the future, you'll set me down a mad woman. [*To* MRS BEL.

*Mrs Bel.* Mr Belville, you'll make my apologies to this lady, and acknowledge that I think her perfectly in her senses.

*Bel.* I wish that I had intirely lost mine.

*Lady Rach.* [*Writing.*] 'I wish that I had 'intirely lost mine.' A very natural wish in such a situation.

*Miss Tem.* Come, you audacious minx, come away. You shall be sent into Yorkshire this very evening; and see what your poor mother will say to you, hussy.

*Miss Lee.* I will go on the stage, if I die for't; and 'tis some comfort there's a play-house at York.

[*Exeunt* MRS TEMPEST, *and* MISS LEESON.

*Bel.* Nancy, I am so ashamed, so humbled, and so penitent, that if you knew what passes here, I am sure you would forgive me.

*Mrs Bel.* My love, though I cannot say I rejoice in your infidelity, yet, believe me, I pity your distress; let us, therefore, think no more of this.

*Lady Rach.* [*Writing.*] 'And think no more 'of this.' This conduct is new in a wife, and very dramatic.

*Bel.* Where, my angel, have you acquired so many requisites to charm with?

*Mrs Bel.* In your society, my dear; and, believe me——that a wife may be as true a friend as any bottle-companion upon earth, though she can neither get merry with you over night, nor blow your brains out about some foolish quarrel in the morning.

*Bel.* If wives knew the omnipotence of virtue, where she wears a smile upon her face, they'd all follow your bewitching example, and make a faithless husband quite an incredible character.

*Lady Rach.* 'Quite an incredible character!' Let me set down that. [*Writing.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to* GENERAL SAVAGE'S.

*Enter* GENERAL *and* CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

*Gen. Sav.* Yes, Horace, I have been just visiting at Belville's.

*Capt. Sav.* You found nobody at home, but Miss Walsingham?

*Gen. Sav.* No, but I had a long conversation with her, and upon a very interesting subject.

*Capt. Sav.* 'Tis as I guessed. [*Aside.*

*Gen. Sav.* She is a most amiable creature, Horace.

*Capt. Sav.* So she is, sir; and will make any man happy that marries her.

*Gen. Sav.* I am glad you think so.

*Capt. Sav.* He's glad I think so! 'tis plain; but I must leave every thing to himself, and seem wholly passive in the affair. [*Aside.*

*Gen. Sav.* A married life after all, Horace, I am now convinced is the most happy, as well as the most reputable.

*Capt. Sav.* It is, indeed, sir.

*Gen. Sav.* Then, perhaps, you would have no

objection to be married, if I offered you as agreeable a young woman as Miss Walsingham?

*Capt. Sav.* 'Twould be my first pride on every occasion, sir, to pay an implicit obedience to your commands.

*Gen. Sav.* That's sensibly said, Horace, and obligingly said; prepare yourself, therefore, for an introduction to the lady in the morning.

*Capt. Sav.* Is the lady prepared to receive me, sir?

*Gen. Sav.* O yes; and you can't think how highly delighted Miss Walsingham appeared, when I acquainted her with my resolution on the subject.

*Capt. Sav.* She's all goodness!

*Gen. Sav.* The more I know her, the more I am charmed with her. I must not be explicit with him yet, for fear my secret should get wind and reach the ears of the enemy.—[*Aside.*]—I propose, Horace, that you should be married immediately.

*Capt Sav.* The sooner the better, sir; I have no will but yours.

*Gen. Sav.* [*Shaking hands with him.*] By the memory of Marlbro' you are a most excellent boy! But what do you think? Miss Walsingham insists upon naming the day.

*Capt. Sav.* And welcome, sir; I am sure she won't make it a distant one.

*Gen. Sav.* O, she said, that nothing in her power should be wanting to make you happy.

*Capt. Sav.* I am sure of that, sir.

*Gen. Sav.* [*A loud knocking.*] Zounds, Horace! here's the disgrace and punishment of my life: let us avoid her as we would a fever in the camp.

*Capt. Sav.* Come to the library, and I'll tell you how whimsically she was treated this morning at Belville's.

*Gen. Sav.* Death and the devil! make haste. O, I must laugh at marriage and be curst to me! But I am providing, Horace, against your falling into my error.

*Capt. Sav.* I am eternally indebted to you, sir. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE IV.

*Enter* MRS BELVILLE, *and* LADY RACHEL.

*Lady Rach.* Nay, Mrs Belville, I have no patience; you act quite unnaturally.

*Mrs Bel.* What! because I am unwilling to be miserable?

*Lady Rach.* This new instance of Mr Belville's infidelity——This attempt to seduce Miss Walsingham, which your woman overheard, is unpardonable.

*Mrs Bel.* I don't say but that I am strongly wounded by his irregularities. Yet, if Mr Belville is unhappily a rover, I would much rather that he should have twenty mistresses, than one.

*Lady Rach.* You astonish me!

*Mrs Bel.* Why, don't you know, my dear madam, that while he is divided amongst a variety of objects, 'tis impossible for him to have a serious attachment?

*Lady Rach.* Lord, Mrs Belville! how can you speak with so much composure? a virtuous woman should be always outrageous upon such an occasion as this.

*Mrs Bel.* What, and weary the innocent sun and moon from the firmament, like a despairing princess in a tragedy—No—no—Lady Rachel! 'tis bad enough to be indifferent to the man I love, without studying to excite his aversion.

*Lady Rach.* How glad I am, that Miss Walsingham made him so heartily ashamed of himself! Lord, these young men are so full of levity! Give me a husband of Mr Torrington's age, say I!

*Mrs Bel.* And give me a husband of Mr Belville's, say I, with all his follies! However, lady Rachel, I am pretty well satisfied that my conduct at Miss Leeson's will have a proper effect upon Mr Belville's generosity, and put an entire end to his gallantries for the future.

*Lady Rach.* Don't deceive yourself, my dear. The gods in the shilling gallery would sooner give up Roast Beef, or go without an epilogue on the first night of a new piece,

*Mrs Bel.* Why should you think so of such a man as Mr Belville?

*Lady Rach.* Because Mr Belville is a man: However, if you dare run the risque—we will try the sincerity of his reformation.

*Mrs Bel.* If I dare run the risque! I would stake my soul upon his honour!

*Lady Rach* Then, your poor soul would be in a very terrible situation.

*Mrs Bel.* By what test can we prove his sincerity?

*Lady Rach.* By a very simple one. You know I write so like Miss Walsingham, that our hands are scarcely known asunder.

*Mrs Bel.* Well———

*Lady Rach.* Why, then, let me write to him as from her.

*Mrs Bel.* If I did not think it would look like a doubt of his honour——

*Lady Rach.* Poh! dare you proceed upon my plan?

*Mrs Bel.* Most confidently: Come to my dressing-room, where you'll find every thing ready for writing, and then you may explain your scheme more particularly.

*Lady Rach.* I'll attend you; but I am really sorry, my dear, for the love of propriety, to see you so calm under the perfidy of your husband; you should be quite wretched———indeed, you should. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*The Temple.*

*Enter* LEESON.

*Lee.* The hell-hounds are after me; and if I am arrested at this time, my honour will not only be blown upon by Belville, but I shall, perhaps, lose Emily into the bargain.

*Enter* LEECH, CROW, *and* WOLF, *dressed in fur habits.*

*Leech.* Yonder, my lads, he darts through the Cloisters! who the devil could think, that he would smoke us in this disguise? Crow, do you take the Fleet-street side of the Temple, as fast as you can, to prevent his doubling us that way; and, Wolf, do you run round the Garden Court, that he may not escape us by the Thames.——I'll follow the strait line myself, and the devil's in the dice, if he is not snapped by one of us.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE VI.—*Changes to another part of the Temple.*

*Enter* LEESON *on one side, and* CONNOLLY *on the other.*

*Lee.* Fly! open the chambers this moment—the bailiffs are after me.

*Con.* Faith, and that I will———but it will be of no use to fly a step neither, if I have not the key.

*Lee.* Zounds! did'nt you lock the door?

*Con.* Yes; but I believe I left the key on the inside———however, your own key will do the business as well.

*Lee.* True; and I forgot it in my confusion. Do you stay here, and throw every impediment in the way of these rascals. [*Exit.*

*Con.* Faith, and that I will!

*Enter* CROW *and* WOLF.

*Crow.* Pray, sir, did you see a gentleman run this way, drest in green and gold.

*Con.* In troth I did.

*Wolf.* And which way did he run?

*Con.* That I can tell you too.

*Wolf.* We shall be much obliged to you.

*Con.* Indeed, and you will not, Mr Catchpole, for the devil an information shall you get from Connolly. I see plainly enough what you are, you black-guards, though there's no guessing at you in these fur-coats.

*Crow.* Keep your information to yourself and be damned! Here the cull comes, a prisoner in the custody of Master Leech.

*Enter* LEESON *and* LEECH.

*Lee.* Well, but treat me like a gentleman——Don't expose me unnecessarily.

*Leech.* Expose you, master! we never expose any body, 'till gentlemen thus expose themselves, venever they compels their creditors to arrest them.

*Con.* And where's your authority for arresting the gentleman? let us see it this minute, for may be you have not it about you.

*Leech.* O here's our authority; ve know as ve had to do vid a lawyer, and so ve came properly prepar'd, my master.

*Lee.* What shall I do?

*Con.* Why hark'e, sir—Don't you think that you and I could beat these three thieves, to their heart's content?—I have nothing but my carcase to venture for you, honey; but that you are as welcome to as the flowers in May.

*Lee.* O, by no means, Connolly; we must not fly in the face of the laws.

*Con.* That's the reason that you are going to fight a duel!

*Lee.* Hark'e, officer—I have some very material business to execute in the course of this evening. Here are five guineas for a little indulgence; and I assure you, upon the honour of a gentleman, that if I have life, I'll attend your own appointment to-morrow morning.

*Leech.* I can't do it, master—Five guineas to be sure is a genteel thing—but I have ten for the taking of you, do you see—and so, if you please to step to my house in Southampton-Buildings, you may send for some friend to bail you, or settle the affair as well as you can with the plaintiff.

*Con.* I'll go bail for him this minute, if you don't want some body to be bail for myself.

*Lee.* Let me reflect a moment.

*Crow.* [*To* CON.] Can you swear yourself worth one hundred and seventy pounds, when your debts are paid?

*Con.* In troth, I cannot, nor one hundred and seventy pence—unless I have a mind to perjure myself.—But one man's body is as good as another's; and, since he has no bail to give you but his flesh, the fattest of us two is the best security.

*Wolf.* No, if we can't get better bail than you, we shall lock up his body in prison according to law.

*Con.* Faith, and a very wise law it must be, which cuts off every method of getting money, by way of making us pay our debts.

*Leech.* Well, Master Leeson, what do you determine upon?

*Lee.* A moment's patience—Yonder I see Mr Torrington—a thought occurs—yet it carries the appearance of fraud—however, as it will be really innocent, nay laughable in the end, and as my ruin or salvation depends upon my present decision, it must be hazarded.

*Crow.* Come, master, fix upon something, and don't keep us waiting for you.

*Con.* By my soul, honey, he don't want you to wait for him: he'll be very much obliged to you if you go away, and leave him to follow his own business.

*Lee.* Well, gentlemen—here comes Mr Torrington: you know him, I suppose, and will be satisfied with his security.

*Leech.* O we'll take his bail for ten thousand pounds, my master—every body knows him to be a man of fortune.

*Lee.* Give me leave to speak to him then, and I shall not be ungrateful for the civility.

*Leech.* Well, we will—But hark'e, lads, look to the passes, that no tricks may be played upon travellers.

*Enter* TORRINGTON.

*Lee.* Mr Torrington, your most obedient.

*Tor.* Your humble servant.

*Lee.* I have many apoligies to make, Mr Torrington, for presuming to stop a gentleman to whom I have not the honour of being known; yet, when I explain the nature of my business, sir, I shall by no means despair of an excuse.

*Tor.* To the business, I beg, sir.

*Lee.* You must know, sir, that the three gentlemen behind me, are three traders from Dantzick, men of considerable property, who, in the present distracted state of Poland, wish to settle with their families in this country.

*Tor.* Dantzick traders.——Ay, I see they are foreigners by their dress.

*Leech.* Ay, now he is opening the affair.

*Lee.* They want therefore to be naturalized—and have been recommended to me for legal advice.

*Tor.* You are at the bar, sir?

*Lee.* I have eat my way to professional honour some time, sir.

*Tor.* Ay, the cooks of the four societies take care that the students shall perform every thing which depends upon teeth, young gentleman. ——The eating exercises are the only ones never dispensed with.

*Lee.* I am, however, a very young barrister, Mr Torrington; and as the affair is of great importance to them, I am desirous, that some gentleman of eminence in the law should revise my poor opinion, before they make it a ground of any serious determination.

*Tor.* You are too modest, young gentleman, to entertain any doubts upon this occasion, as nothing is clearer than the laws respecting the naturalization of foreigners.

*Con.* Faith, the old gentleman smiles very good naturedly.

*Leech.* I fancy he'll stand it, Crow, and advance the crop for the younker.

*Lee.* To be sure, the laws are very clear to gentlemen of your superior abilities.—But I have candidly acknowledged the weakness of my own judgment to my clients, and advised them so warmly to solicit your opinion, that they will not be satisfied unless you kindly consent to oblige them.

*Tor.* O, if nothing but my opinion will satisfy them, let them follow me to my chambers, and I'll satisfy them directly.

*Lee.* You are extremely kind, sir, and they shall attend you.—Gentlemen, will you be so good as to follow Mr Torrington to his chambers, and he'll satisfy you intirely.

*Wolf.* Mind that.

*Con.* Musha! the blessing of St Patrick upon that ould head of yours!

*Tor.* What they speak English, do they?

*Lee.* Very tolerably, sir.—Bred up general traders, they have a knowledge of several languages; and it would be highly for the good of the kingdom, if we could get more of them to settle among us.

*Tor.* Right, young gentleman! the number of the people forms the true riches of a state; however, now-a-days, London itself is not only gone out of town, but England itself, by an unaccountable fatality, seems inclined to take up her residence in America.

*Lee.* True, sir! and to cultivate the barbarous borders of the Ohio, we are hourly deserting the beautiful banks of the Thames.

*Tor.* [*Shaking him by the hand.*] You must come and see me at my chambers, young gentleman; we must be better known to one another.

*Con.* Do you mind that, you thieves?—

*Lee.* 'Twill be equally my pride and my happiness to merit that honour, sir.

*Tor.* Let your friends follow me, sir!—and pray, do you call upon me soon; you shall see a little plan, which I have drawn up to keep this poor country, if possible, from undergoing a general sentence of transportation.—Be pleased to come along with me, gentlemen—I'll satisfy you.

[*Exit.*

*Leech.* Well, master! I wish you joy.——You can't say but we behaved to you like gemmen!

[*Exeunt bailiffs.*

*Lee.* And if you were all three in the cart, I don't know which of you I would wish to have respited from execution. I have played Mr Torrington a little trick, Connolly; but the moment I come back I shall recover my reputation, if I even put myself voluntarily into the hands of those worthy gentlemen.—— [*Exit.*

*Con.* Musha! long life to you, old Shillaley! I don't wonder at your being afraid of a prison; for 'tis to be sure a blessed place to live in!—And now, let my thick skull consider, if there's any way of preventing this infernal duel.——Suppose I have him bound over to the peace!—No, that will never do: it would be a shameful thing for a gentleman to keep the peace! besides, I must appear in the business, and people may then think, from my connection with him, that he has'n't honour enough to throw away his life!—Suppose I go another way to work, and send an anonymous letter about the affair to Mrs Belville; they say, though she is a woman of quality, that no creature upon earth can be fonder of her hus-

band!—Surely the good genius of Ireland put this scheme in my head.—I'll about it this minute, and if there's but one of them kept from the field, I don't think that the other can be much hurt, when there will be no body to fight with him. [*Exit.*

SCENE VII.—*Changes to Captain* SAVAGE'S *lodgings.*

*Enter* CAPTAIN SAVAGE *and* BELVILLE.

*Capt. Sav.* Why, faith, Belville, your detection, and so speedily too, after all the pretended sanctity of the morning, must have thrown you into a most humiliating situation.

*Bel.* Into the most distressing you can imagine. Had my wife raved at my falsehood, in the customary manner, I could have brazened it out pretty tolerably; but the angel-like sweetness, with which she bore the mortifying discovery, planted daggers in my bosom, and made me, at that time, wish her the veriest vixen in the whole creation.

*Capt. Sav.* Yet, the suffering forbearance of a wife, is a quality, for which she is seldom allowed her merit. We think it her duty to put up with our falsehood, and imagine ourselves exceedingly generous in the main, if we practise no other method of breaking her heart.

*Bel.* Monstrous! monstrous! from this moment, I bid an everlasting adieu to my vices: the generosity of my dear girl—

*Enter a Servant to* BELVILLE.

*Ser.* Here's a letter, sir, which Mr Spruce has brought you.

*Bel.* Give me leave, Savage—Zounds! what an industrious devil the father of darkness is, when the moment a man determines upon a good action, he sends such a thing as this, to stagger his resolution!

*Capt. Sav.* What have you got there?

*Bel.* You shall know presently. Will you let Spruce come in?

*Capt. Sav.* Where have you acquired all this ceremony?

*Bel.* Bid Spruce come in.

*Ser.* Yes, sir.

*Capt. Sav.* Is that another challenge?

*Bel.* 'Tis, upon my soul! but it came from a beautiful enemy, and dares me to give a meeting to Miss Walsingham.

*Capt. Sav.* How!

*Enter* SPRUCE.

*Bel.* Pray, Spruce, who gave you this letter?

*Spruce.* Miss Walsingham's woman, sir: she said it was about very particular business, and therefore I wou'dn't trust it by any of the footmen.

*Capt. Sav.* O, damn your diligence! [*Aside.*

*Bel.* You may go home, Spruce.

*Spruce.* [*Looking significantly at his master.*] Is there no answer necessary, sir?

*Bel.* I shall call at home myself, and give the necessary answer,

*Spruce.* [*Aside.*] What can be the matter with him all on a sudden, that he is so cold upon the scent of wickedness? [*Exit.*

*Capt. Sav.* And what answer do you propose making to it, Belville?

*Bel.* Read the letter, and then tell me what I should do—You know Miss Walsingham's hand?

*Capt. Sav.* O perfectly!—This is not—yes, it is her hand!—I have too many curst occasions to know it. [*Aside.*

*Bel.* What are you muttering about?—Read the letter.

*Capt. Sav.* [*Reads.*] 'If you are not intirely 'discouraged by our last conversation, from re-'newing the subject which then gave offence—'

*Bel.* Which then gave offence—You see, Savage, that it is not offensive any longer.

*Capt. Sav.* 'Sdeath! you put me out.——'You 'may, at the masquerade, this evening—'

*Bel.* You remember how earnest she was for the masquerade party?

*Capt. Sav.* Yes, yes, I remember it well: and I remember, also, how hurt she was this morning, about the affair of Miss Leeson. [*Aside.*] 'Have an opportunity of entertaining me'——O, the strumpet! [*Aside.*

*Bel.* But mind the cunning with which she signs the note, for fear it should, by any accident, fall into improper hands.

*Capt. Sav.* Ay, and you put it into very proper hands. [*Aside.*] 'I shall be in the blue domino.' —The signature is— 'YOU KNOW WHO.'

*Bel.* Yes, you know who.

*Capt. Sav.* May be, however, she has only written this to try you.

*Bel.* To try me! for what purpose? but if you read a certain postscript there, I fancy you'll be of a different opinion.

*Capt. Sav.* 'If Mr Belville has any house of 'character to retire to, it would be most agreea-'ble, as there could be no fear of interruption.'

*Bel.* What do you say now?—Can you recommend me to any house of character, where we shall be free from interruption?

*Capt. Sav.* O, curse her house of character! [*Aside.*] But surely, Belville, after your late determined resolution to reform———

*Bel.* Zounds! I forgot that.

*Capt. Sav.* After the unexampled sweetness of your wife's behaviour———

*Bel.* Don't go on, Savage: there is something here [*Putting his hand in his bosom.*] which feels already not a little aukwardly.

*Capt. Sav.* And can you still persist?

*Bel.* I am afraid to answer your question.

*Capt. Sav.* Where the plague are you flying?

*Bel.* From the justice of your censure, Horace; my own is sufficiently severe; yet I see

that I shall be a rascal again, in spite of my teeth; and good advice is only thrown away upon so incorrigible a libertine. [*Exit.*

*Capt. Sav.* So, then, this diamond of mine proves a counterfeit after all, and I am really the veriest wretch existing, at the moment in which I conceived myself the peculiar favourite of fortune. O the cursed, cursed sex! I'll see her once more to upbraid her with her falsehood, then acquaint my father with her perfidy, to justify my breaking off the marriage, and tear her from my thoughts for ever.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* Sir, sir, sir!—

*Capt. Sav.* Sir, sir, sir!—What the devil's the matter with the booby!

*Ser.* Miss Walsingham, sir!

*Capt. Sav.* Ah! what of her?

*Ser.* Was this moment overturned at Mr Belville's door; and, John tells me, carried in a fit into the house.

*Capt. Sav.* Ha! let me fly to her assistance! [*Exit.*

*Ser.* Ha, let me fly to her assistance—O, are you thereabouts? [*Exit.*

SCENE VIII.—*Changes to* MR BELVILLE'S.

*Enter* MRS BELVILLE, MISS WALSINGHAM, *and* LADY RACHEL MILDEW.

*Mrs Bel.* But are you indeed recovered, my dear?

*Miss Wal.* Perfectly, my dear——I wasn't in the least hurt, though greatly terrified, when the two fools of coachmen contended for the honour of being first, and drove the carriages together with a violence incredible.

*Lady Rach.* I sincerely rejoice at your escape; and now, Mrs Belville, as you promised to choose a dress for me, if I went in your party to the masquerade this evening, can you spare a quarter of an hour to Tavistock-street?

*Mrs Bel.* I am loth to leave Miss Walsingham alone, lady Rachel, so soon after her fright.

*Miss Wal.* Nay, I insist that you don't stay at home upon my account; and lady Rachel's company to the masquerade is a pleasure I have such an interest in, that I beg you won't delay a moment to oblige her.

*Mrs Bel.* Well, then, I attend your ladyship.

*Lady Rach.* You are very good; and so is Miss Walsingham. [*Exit.*

*Miss Wal.* I wonder Captain Savage stays away so long! where can he be all this time?—I die with impatience to tell him of my happy interview with the General.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* Captain Savage, madam.

*Miss Wal.* Shew him in. [*Exit Servant.*] How he must rejoice to find his conjectures so fortunately realized!

*Enter* CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

*Capt. Sav.* So, madam, you have just escaped a sad accident?

*Miss Wal.* And by that agreeable tone and countenance, one would almost imagine you were very sorry for my escape.

*Capt. Sav.* People, madam, who doubt the kindness of others, are generally conscious of some defect in themselves.

*Miss Wal.* Don't madam me, with this accent of indifference. What has put you out of humour?

*Capt. Sav.* Nothing!

*Miss Wal.* Are you indisposed?

*Capt. Sav.* The crocodile! the crocodile! [*Aside.*

*Miss Wal.* Do you go to the masquerade to-night?

*Capt. Sav.* No; but you do.

*Miss Wal.* Why not? Come, don't be ill-natured; I'm not your wife yet!

*Capt. Sav.* Nor ever will be, I promise you!

*Miss Wal.* What is the meaning of this very whimsical behaviour?

*Capt. Sav.* The settled composure of her impudence is intolerable. [*Aside.*] Madam, madam! how have I deserved this usage?

*Miss Wal.* Nay, sir, sir! how have I deserved it, if you go to that?

*Capt. Sav.* The letter, madam!—the letter!

*Miss Wal.* What letter!

*Capt. Sav.* Your letter; inviting a gallant from the masquerade to a house of character, madam!——What! you appear surprised?

*Miss Wal.* Well I may, at so shameless an aspersion!

*Capt. Sav.* Madam, madam, I have seen your letter! Your new lover could not keep your secret a moment. But I have nothing to do with you—and only come to declare my reasons for renouncing you everlastingly!

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* General Savage, madam.

*Miss Wal.* Shew him up. [*Exit Ser.*] I am glad he is come, sir! inform him of your resolution to break off the match, and let there be an end of every thing between us!

*Enter* GENERAL SAVAGE.

*Gen. Sav.* The news of your accident reached me but this moment, madam!—or I should have posted much sooner to reconnoitre your situation. My-aid-de-camp, however, has not been inattentive, I see! and, I dare say, his diligence will not be the least lessened, when he knows his obligations to you.

*Capt. Sav.* Oh, sir, I am perfectly sensible of

my obligations! and the consciousness of them, was one motive of my coming here!

*Gen. Sav.* Then, you have made your acknowledgments to Miss Walsingham, I hope?

*Miss Wal.* He has, indeed, general, said a great deal more than was necessary.

*Gen. Sav.* That opinion proceeds from the liberality of your temper; for, 'tis impossible he can ever say enough of your goodness.

*Capt. Sav.* So it is; if you knew but all, sir!

*Gen. Sav.* Why, who can know more of the matter than myself?

*Miss Wal.* This gentlemen, it seems, has something, general Savage, very necessary for your information.

*Gen. Sav.* How's this?

*Capt. Sav.* Nay, sir, I only say, that, for some particular reasons, which I shall communicate to you at a more proper time, I must beg leave to decline the lady whose hand you kindly intended for me this morning.

*Gen. Sav.* O, you must!——Why, then, I hope you decline, at the same time, all pretension to every shilling of my fortune? It is not in my power to make you fight, you poltroon, but I can punish you for cowardice.

*Miss Wal.* Nay, but, general, let me interpose here——If he can maintain any charge against the lady's reputation, 'twould be very hard that he should be disinherited for a necessary attention to his honour.

*Capt. Sav.* And if I don't make the charge good, I submit to be disinherited without murmuring.

*Gen. Sav.* 'Tis false as hell! the lady is infinitely too good for you in every respect; and I undervalued her worth, when I thought of her for your wife.

*Miss Wal.* I am sure the lady is much obliged to your favourable opinion, sir.

*Gen. Sav.* Not in the least, madam; I only do her common justice.

*Capt. Sav.* I cannot bear that you should be displeased a moment, sir; suffer me, therefore, to render the conversation less equivocal, and a few words will explain every thing.

*Gen. Sav.* Sirrah, I'll hear no explanation—ar'n't my orders, that you should mary?

*Miss Wal.* For my sake hear him, general Savage.

*Capt. Sav.* Madam, I disdain every favour that is to be procured by your interposition.

[*Exit* CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

*Miss Wal.* This matter must not be suffered to proceed farther though, provokingly, cruelly as the captain has behaved.

[*Aside.*

*Gen. Sav.* What's that you say, my bewitching girl?

*Miss Wal.* I say that you must make it up with the captain, and the best way will be to hear his charge patiently.

*Gen. Sav.* I am shocked at the brutality of the dog! he has no more principle than a suttler, and no more steadiness than a young recruit upon drill—But you shall have ample satisfaction:—this very day I'll cut him off from a possibility of succeeding to a shilling of my fortune. He shall be as miserable as———

*Miss Wal.* Dear general, do you think that this would give me any satisfaction?

*Gen. Sav.* How he became acquainted with my design, I know not; but I see plainly that his mutiny proceeds from his aversion to my marrying again.

*Miss Wal.* To your marrying again, sir! why should he object to that?

*Gen. Sav.* Why, for fear I should have other children, to be sure.

*Miss Wal.* Indeed, sir, it was not from that motive; and, if I can overlook his folly, you may be prevailed upon to forgive it.

*Gen. Sav.* After what you have seen, justice should make you a little more attentive to your own interest, my lovely girl!

*Miss Wal.* What! at the expence of his?

*Gen. Sav.* In the approaching change of your situation, there may be a family of your own.

*Miss Wal.* Suppose there should, sir; won't there be a family of his too?

*Gen. Sav.* I care not what becomes of his family.

*Miss Wal.* But, pray, let me think a little about it, general.

*Gen. Sav.* 'Tis hard, indeed, when I was so desirous of promoting his happiness, that he should throw any thing in the way of mine.

*Miss Wal.* Recollect, sir, his offence was wholly confined to me.

*Gen. Sav.* Well, my love, and isn't it throwing an obstacle in the way of my happiness, when he abuses you so grossly for your readiness to marry me?

*Miss Wal.* Sir!——

*Gen. Sav.* I see, with all your good nature, that this is a question you cannot rally against.

*Miss Wal.* It is indeed, sir——What will become of me!

[*Aside.*

*Gen. Sav.* You seem suddenly disordered, my love!

*Miss Wal.* Why, really, sir, this affair affects me strongly!

*Gen. Sav.* Well, it is possible, that, for your sake, I may not punish him with as much severity as I intended: in about an hour, I shall beg leave to beat up your quarters again with Mr Torrington; for 'tis necessary I should shew you some proof of my gratitude, since you have been so kindly pleased to honour me with a proof of your affection.

*Miss Wal.* [*Aside.*] So, now indeed, we're in a hopeful situation!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IX.—*Changes to* TORRINGTON'S *chambers in the Temple.*

*Enter* TORRINGTON, LEECH, CROW, *and* WOLF.

*Tor.* Walk in, gentlemen——A good pretty young man, that we parted with just now—Pray, gentlemen, be seated——

*Leech.* He is indeed a very pretty young man.

*Crow.* And knows how to do a genteel thing—

*Wolf.* As handsome as any body.

*Tor.* There is a rectitude, besides, in his polemical principles.

*Leech.* In what, sir?

*Tor.* His polemical principles.

*Crow.* What are they, sir?

*Tor.* I beg pardon, gentlemen; you are not sufficiently intimate with the English language, to carry on a conversation in it.

*Wolf.* Yes, we are, sir.

*Tor.* Because, if it is more agreeable to you, we'll talk in Latin?

*Leech.* We don't understand Latin, sir.

*Tor.* I thought you generally conversed in that language abroad.

*Crow.* No, nor at home neither, sir: there is a language we sometimes talk in, called slang.

*Tor.* A species of the ancient Sclavonic, I suppose?

*Leech.* No, its a little rum tongue, that we understand among von another——

*Tor.* I never heard of it before—but to business, gentlemen—the constitution of your country is at present very deplorable, I hear?

*Wolf.* Why, indeed, sir, there never was a greater cry against people in our way.

*Tor.* But you have laws, I suppose, for the regulation of your trade?

*Leech.* To be sure we have, sir: nevertheless, ve find it very difficult to carry it on.

*Crow.* We are harassed by so many oppressions—

*Tor.* What, by the Prussian troops?

*Crow.* The Prussian troops, sir!—Lord bless you, no! by the courts of law; if ve make never so small a mistake in our duties.

*Tor.* Then your duties are very high, or very numerous——

*Leech.* I am afraid we don't understand one another, sir——

*Tor.* I am afraid so, too—Pray, where are your papers, gentlemen?

*Leech.* Here's all the papers we have, sir——You'll find every thing right——

*Tor.* I dare say I shall. [*Reads.*] 'Middlesex to wit'—Why, this is a warrant from the Sheriff's office to arrest some body!

*Crow.* To be sure it is, sir——

*Tor.* And what do you give it to me for?

*Wolf.* To shew that we have done nothing contrary to law, sir.

*Tor.* Who supposes that you have?

*Leech.* Only because you asked for our papers, sir.

*Tor.* Why, what has this to do with them?

*Crow.* Why, that's the warrant for arresting the young gentleman.

*Tor.* What young gentleman?

*Wolf.* Lord bless your heart, sir! that stopped you in the street, and that you bailed for the hundred and seventy pounds.

*Tor.* I bailed for an hundred and seventy pounds!

*Leech.* Sure, sir, you told me to follow you to your chambers, and you would satisfy us.

*Tor.* Pray hear me, sir—ar'n't you a trader of Dantzick?

*Leech.* I a trader! I am no trader, nor did I ever before hear of any such place.

*Tor.* Perhaps this gentleman is——

*Crow.* Lord help your head, I was born in Claremarket, and never was farther out of town in my life than Brentford, to attend the Sheriff at the Middlesex election!

*Tor.* And it may be that you don't want to be naturalized? [*To* WOLF.

*Wolf.* For what, my master? I am a liveryman of London already, and have a vote, besides, for the four counties.

*Tor.* Well, gentlemen, having been so good as to tell me what you are not, add a little to the obligation, and tell me what you are?

*Leech.* Why, sir, the warrant that we have shewed you, tells that ve are sheriff's officers.

*Tor.* Sheriff's officers are you?—O-ho!—Sheriff's officers!—then I suppose you must be three very honest gentlemen?

*Crow.* Sir!—we are as honest——

*Tor.* As sheriff's officers usually are——Yet could you think of nobody, but a man of the law, for the object of your conspiracy?

*Leech.* Sir, we don't understand what you mean?

*Tor.* But I understand what you mean, and therefore I'll deal with you properly.

*Wolf.* I hope, sir, you'll pay us the money, for we can't go till the affair is certainly settled in some manner.

*Tor.* O, you can't?—why, then, I will pay you—But it shall be in a coin you won't like, depend upon it—Here, Mr Molesworth——

*Enter* MOLESWORTH.

Make out mittimusses for the commitment of these three fellows; they are disguised to defraud people; but I am in the commission for Middlesex, and I'll have you all brought to justice—I'll teach you to go masquerading about the streets. So, take them along, Mr Molesworth.

*Leech.* Ve don't fear your mittimus.

*Crow.* We'll put in bail directly, and try it with you, though you are a great lawyer.

*Wolf.* He'll make a flat of himself in this Nantzick affair.

*Tor.* Mighty well!—And if I find the young barrister, he may, perhaps, take a trip to the barbarous borders of the Ohio, from the beautiful banks of the Thames. [*Exeunt.*

## ACT IV.

SCENE I.—*An apartment at* BELVILLE'S.

*Enter* MRS BELVILLE, *and* CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

*Mrs Bel.* DON'T argue with me, captain Savage; but consider that I am a wife, and pity my distraction.

*Capt. Sav.* Dear madam, there is no occasion to be so much alarmed. Mr Belville has very properly determined not to fight; he told me so himself, and should have been effectually prevented, if I hadn't known his resolution.

*Mrs Bel.* There is no knowing to what extremities he may be provoked, if he meets Mr Leeson. I have sent for you, therefore, to beg, that you will save him from the possibility, either of exposing himself to any danger, or of doing an injury to his adversary.

*Capt. Sav.* What would you have me do, madam?

*Mrs Bel.* Fly to Hyde Park, and prevent, if yet possible, his meeting with Mr Leeson: do it, I conjure you, if you'd save me from desperation.

*Capt. Sav.* Though you have no reason whatever to be apprehensive for his safety, madam, yet, since you are so very much affected, I'll immediately execute your commands.

[*Exit* CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

*Mrs Bel.* Merciful Heaven! where is the generosity, where is the sense, where is the shame of men, to find a pleasure in pursuits, which they cannot remember without the deepest horror, which they cannot follow without the meanest fraud, and which they cannot effect, without consequences the most dreadful? The single word, Pleasure, in a masculine sense, comprehends every thing that is cruel! every thing that is base! and every thing that is desperate! Yet men, in other respects, the noblest of their species, make it the principal business of their lives, and do not hesitate to break in upon the peace of the happiest families, though their own must be necessarily exposed to destruction—O Belville! Belville!—my life! my love!—The greatest crime which a libertine can ever experience, is too despicable to be envied—'tis at best nothing but a victory over his own humanity; and, if he is a husband, he must be dead, indeed, if he is not doubly tortured upon the wheel of recollection.

*Enter* MISS WALSINGHAM *and* LADY RACHEL MILDEW.

*Miss Wal.* My dear Mrs Belville, I am extremely unhappy to see you so distressed!

*Lady Rach.* Now, I am extremely glad to see her so! for, if she was not greatly distressed, it would be monstrously unnatural!

*Mrs Bel.* O, Matilda!—my husband! my husband! my children! my children!

*Miss Wal.* Don't weep, my dear! don't weep! pray, be comforted; all may end happily! Lady Rachel, beg of her not to cry so.

*Lady Rach.* Why, you are crying yourself, Miss Walsingham; and, though I think it out of character to encourage her tears, I can't help keeping you company.

*Mrs Bel.* O, why is not some effectual method contrived to prevent this horrible practice of duelling!

*Lady Rach.* I'll expose it on the stage, since the law, now-a-days, kindly leaves the whole cognizance of it to the theatre.

*Miss Wal.* And yet, if the laws against it were as well enforced as the laws against destroying the game, perhaps, it would be equally for the benefit of the kingdom.

*Mrs Bel.* No law will ever be effectual till the custom is rendered infamous.—Wives must shriek!—mothers must agonize!—orphans must multiply! unless some blessed hand strips the fascinating glare from honourable murder, and bravely exposes the idol who is worshipped thus in blood! While it is disreputable to obey the laws, we cannot look for reformation:—But, if the duelist is once banished from the presence of his sovereign;—if he is for life excluded the confidence of his country;—if a mark of indelible disgrace is stamped upon him, the sword of public justice will be the sole chastiser of wrongs; trifles will not be punished with death; and offences, really meriting such a punishment, will be reserved for the only proper avenger, the common executioner.

*Lady Rach.* I could not have expressed myself better on the subject, my dear: but, till such a hand as you talk of is found, the best will fall into the error of the times.

*Miss Wal.* Yes; and butcher each other like madmen, for fear their courage should be suspected by fools.

*Mrs Bel.* No news yet from captain Savage?

*Lady Rach.* He can't have reached Hyde-park yet, my dear.

*Miss Wal.* Let us lead you to your chamber, my dear; you'll be better there.

*Mrs Bel.* Matilda, I must be wretched any where; but I'll attend you.

*Lady Rach.* Thank Heaven I have no husband to plunge me into such a situation!

*Miss Wal.* And, if I thought I could keep my resolution, I'd determine this moment on living

single all the days of my life. Pray, don't spare my arm, my dear. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*Hyde-park.*

*Enter* BELVILLE.

*Bel.* I fancy I am rather before the time of appointment; engagements of this kind are the only ones, in which, now-a-days, people pretend to any punctuality:—a man is allowed half an hour's law to dinner; but a thrust through the body must be given within a second of the clock.

*Enter* LEESON.

*Lee.* Your servant, sir.——Your name, I suppose, is Belville?

*Bel.* Your supposition is very right, sir; and, I fancy, I am not much in the wrong, when I suppose your name to be Leeson.

*Lee.* It is, sir: I am sorry I should keep you here a moment.

*Bel.* I am very sorry, sir, you should bring me here at all!

*Lee.* I regret the occasion, be assured, sir; but, 'tis not now a time for talking; we must proceed to action.

*Bel.* And yet, talking is all the action I shall proceed to, depend upon it.

*Lee.* What do you mean, sir? Where are your pistols?

*Bel.* Where I intend they shall remain, till my next journey into the country; very quietly over the chimney in my dressing-room.

*Lee.* You treat this matter with too much levity, Mr Belville; take your choice of mine, sir.

*Bel.* I'd rather take them both, if you please; for, then, no mischief shall be done with either of them.

*Lee.* Sir, this trifling is adding insult to injury; and shall be resented accordingly. Did not you come here to give me satisfaction?

*Bel.* Yes; every satisfaction in my power.

*Lee.* Take one of these pistols, then.

*Bel.* Come, Mr Leeson, your bravery will not at all be lessened by the exercise of a little understanding: If nothing less than my life can atone for the injury I have unconsciously done you, fire at me instantly, but don't be offended because I decline to do you an additional wrong.

*Lee.* 'Sdeath, sir, do you think I come here with an intention to murder?

*Bel.* You come to arm the guilty against the innocent, sir; and that, in my opinion, is the most atrocious intention of murder!

*Lee.* How's this!——

*Bel.* Look'e, Mr Leeson, there's your pistol—[*Throws it on the ground.*] I have already acted very wrongly with respect to your sister; but, sir, I have some character (though, perhaps, little enough) to maintain, and I will not do a still worse action, in raising my hand against your life.

*Lee.* This hypocritical cant of cowardice, sir, is too palpable to disarm my resentment; though I held you to be a man of profligate principles, I nevertheless considered you as a man of courage; but, if you hesitate a moment longer, by Heaven I'll chastise you on the spot! [*Draws.*]

*Bel.* I must defend my life; though, if it did not look like timidity, I would inform you—[*They fight*; LEESON *is disarmed.*]—Mr Leeson, there is your sword again.

*Lee.* Srike it through my bosom, sir!—I don't desire to out-live this instant!

*Bel.* I hope, my dear sir, that you will long live happy!—as your sister, though, to my shame, I can claim no merit on that account, is recovered, unpolluted, by her family: but, let me beg, that you will now see the folly of decisions by the sword, when success is not fortunately chained to the side of justice. Before I leave you, receive my sincerest apologies for the injuries I have done you; and, be assured, no occurrence will ever give me greater pleasure, than an opportunity of serving you, if, after what is past, you shall, at any time, condescend to use me as a friend.

[*Exit* BEL.

*Lee.* Very well—very well—very well.——

*Enter* CONNOLLY.

What! you have been within hearing, I suppose?

*Con.* You may say that.

*Lee.* And is not this very fine?

*Con.* Why, I can't say much as to the finery of it, sir; but it is very foolish.

*Lee.* And so this is my satisfaction, after all!

*Con.* Yes; and pretty satisfaction it is! When Mr Belville did you but one injury, he was the greatest villain in the world; but, now, that he has done you two, in drawing his sword upon you, I suppose he is a very worthy gentleman.

*Lee.* To be foiled, baffled, disappointed in my revenge!—What though my sister is by accident unstained, his intentions are as criminal as if her ruin was actually perpetrated; there is no possibility of enduring this reflection!—I wish not for the blood of my enemy, but I would, at least, have the credit of giving him life.

*Con.* Arrah, my dear, if you have any regard for the life of your enemy, you should not put him in the way of death.

*Lee.* No more of these reflections, my dear Connolly; my own feelings are painful enough. Will you be so good as to take these damned pistols, and go with me to the coach?

*Con.* Troth, and that I will! but don't make yourself uneasy; consider that you have done every thing which honour required at your hands.

*Lee.* I hope so.

*Con.* Why, you know so: you have broke the laws of Heaven and earth, as nobly as the first lord in the land; and you have convinced the world, that when any body has done your family one injury, you have courage enough to do it another yourself, by hazarding your life.

*Lee.* Those, Conolly, who would live reputa-

bly in any country, must regulate their conduct, in many cases, by its very prejudices.—Custom, with respect to duelling, is a tyrant, whose despotism no body ventures to attack, though every body detests its cruelty.

*Con.* I did not imagine that a tyrant of any kind would be tolerated in England. But where do you think of going now? For chambers, you know, will be most delightfully dangerous, till you have come to an explanation with Mr Torrington.

*Lee.* I shall go to Mrs Crayons.

*Con.* What! the gentlewoman that paints all manner of colours in red chalk?

*Lee.* Yes; where I first became acquainted with Emily.

*Con.* And where the sweet creature has met you two or three times, under pretence of sitting for her picture?

*Lee.* Mrs Crayons will, I dare say, oblige me, in this exigency, with an apartment for a few days. I shall write, from her house, a full explanation of my conduct to Mr Torrington, and let him know where I am; for the honest old man must not be the smallest sufferer, though a thousand prisons were to stare me in the face.—But come, Connolly, we have no time to lose:—Yet, if you had any prudence, you would abandon me in my present situation.

*Con.* Ah, sir, is this your opinion of my friendship? Do you think that any thing can ever give me half so much pleasure in serving you, as seeing you surrounded by misfortunes? [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to an apartment at* BELVILLE'S.

*Enter* GENERAL SAVAGE, MR TORRINGTON, *and* SPRUCE.

*Spruce.* Miss Walsingham will wait on you immediately, gentlemen.

*Gen. Sav.* Very well.

*Spruce.* [*Aside.*] What can old Holofernes want so continually with Miss Walsingham?

[*Exit* SPRUCE.

*Gen. Sav.* When I bring this sweet mild creature home, I shall be able to break her spirit to my own wishes—I'll inure her to proper discipline from the first moment, and make her tremble at the very thought of mutiny.

*Tor.* Ah, general, you are wonderfully brave, when you know the meekness of your adversary.

*Gen. Sav.* Envy, Torrington—stark, staring envy:——Few fellows, on the borders of fifty, have so much reason as myself, to boast of a blooming young woman's partiality.

*Tor.* On the borders of fifty, man!—beyond the confines of threescore.

*Gen. Sav.* The more reason I have to boast of my victory, then; but don't grumble at my triumph: you shall have a kiss of the bride: let that content you, Torrington.

*Enter* MISS WALSINGHAM.

*Miss Wal.* Gentlemen, your most obedient;—general, I intended writing to you about a trifling mistake; but, poor Mrs Belville has been so very ill, that I could not find an opportunity.

*Gen. Sav.* I am very sorry for Mrs Belville's illness; but I am happy, madam, to be personally in the way of receiving your commands; and I wait upon you with Mr Torrington, to talk about a marriage-settlement.

*Miss Wal.* Heavens, how shall I undeceive him! [*Aside.*

*Tor.* 'Tis rather an aukward business, Miss Walsingham, to trouble you upon; but as the general wishes that the affair may be as private as possible, he thought it better to speak to yourself, than to treat with any other person.

*Gen. Sav.* Yes, my lovely girl; and, to convince you that I intended to carry on an honourable war, not to pillage like a free-booter, Mr Torrington will be a trustee.

*Miss Wal.* I am infinitely obliged to your intention, but there's no necessity to talk about my settlement—for———

*Gen. Sav.* Pardon, me, madam!—pardon me, there is—besides, I have determined that there shall be one, and what I once determine, is absolute.—A tolerable hint for her own behaviour, when I have married her, Torrington.

[*Aside to* TOR.

*Miss Wal.* I must not shock him before Mr Torrington. [*Aside.*] General Savage, will you give me leave to speak a few words in private to you?

*Gen. Sav.* There's no occasion for sounding a retreat, madam. Mr Torrington is acquainted with the whole business; and I am determined, for your sake, that nothing shall be done without him.

*Tor.* I can have no objection to your hearing the lady *ex parte*, general.

*Miss Wal.* What I have to say, sir, is of a very particular nature.

*Tor.* [*Rising.*] I'll leave the room, then.

*Gen. Sav.* [*Opposing him.*] You shan't leave the room, Torrington. Miss Walsingham shall have a specimen of my command, even before marriage; and you shall see, that every woman is not to bully me out of my determination.

[*Aside to* TOR.

*Miss Wal.* Well, general, you must have your own way.

*Gen Sav.* [*To* TOR.] Don't you see that 'tis only fighting the battle stoutly at first, with one of these gentle creatures?

*Tor.* [*Significantly.*] Ah, general!

*Gen. Sav.* I own, madam, your situation is a distressing one; let us sit down—let us sit down—

*Miss Wal.* It is unspeakably distressing, indeed, sir.

*Tor.* Distressing, however, as it may be, we must proceed to issue, madam; the general pro-

poses your jointure to be one thousand pounds a-year.

*Miss Wal.* General Savage!

*Gen. Sav.* You think this too little, perhaps?

*Miss Wal.* I can't think of any jointure, sir.

*Tor.* Why, to be sure, a jointure is, at best, but a melancholy possession, for it must be purchased by the loss of the husband you love!

*Miss Wal.* Pray, don't name it, Mr Torrington!

*Gen. Sav.* [*Kissing her hand.*] A thousand thanks to you, my lovely girl!

*Miss Wal.* For Heaven's sake, let go my hand!

*Gen. Sav.* I shall be mad 'till it gives me legal possession of the town!

*Miss Wal.* Gentlemen—general—Mr Torrington, I—beg you'll hear me!

*Gen. Sav.* By all means, my adorable creature! I can never have too many proofs of your disinterested affection.

*Miss Wal.* There is a capital mistake in this whole affair——I am sinking under a load of distress!

*Gen. Sav.* Your confusion makes you look charmingly, though.

*Miss Wal.* There is no occasion to talk of jointure, or marriages to me; I am not going to be married.

*Tor.* What's this?

*Miss Wal.* Nor have I an idea in nature, however enviable I think the honour, of being your wife, sir.

*Gen. Sav.* Madam!

*Tor.* Why, here's a demur!

*Miss Wal.* I am afraid, sir, that, in our conversation this morning, my confusion, arising from the particularity of the subject, has led you into a material misconception.

*Gen. Sav.* I am thunder-struck, madam! I could not mistake my ground.

*Tor.* As clear a *nol. pros.* as ever was issued by an attorney-general.

*Gen. Sav.* Surely you can't forget, that, at the first word, you hung out a flag of truce; told me even, that I had a previous friend in the fort; and did not so much as hint a single article of capitulation?

*Tor.* Now for the rejoinder to this replication!

*Miss Wal.* All this is unquestionably true, general, and perhaps a good deal more; but in reality, my confusion before you on this subject to-day was such, that I scarcely knew what I said; I was dying with distress, and at this moment am very little better. Permit me to retire, general Savage, and only suffer me to add, that though I think myself highly flattered by your addresses, it is impossible for me ever to receive them. Lord! Lord! I am glad 'tis over in any manner. [*Exit.*

*Tor.* Why, we are a little out of this matter, general; the judge has decided against us, when we imagined ourselves sure of the cause.

*Gen. Sav.* The gates shut in my teeth, just as I expected the keys from the governor!

*Tor.* I am disappointed myself, man; I shan't have a kiss of the bride.

*Gen. Sav.* At my time of life, too!

*Tor.* I said, from the first, you were too old for her.

*Gen. Sav.* Zounds! to fancy myself sure of her, and to triumph upon a certainty of victory!

*Tor.* Ay, and to kiss her hand in a rapturous return for her tenderness to you:—let me advise you never to kiss before folks, as long as you live again.

*Gen. Sav.* Don't distract me, Torrington! a joke, where a friend has the misfortune to lose the battle, is a downright inhumanity.

*Tor.* You told me, that your son had accused her of something that you would not bear; suppose we call at his lodgings? he, perhaps, as an *amicus curiæ*, may be able to give us a little information.

*Gen. Sav.* Thank you for the thought—But keep your finger more than ever upon your lips, dear Torrington. You know how I dread the danger of ridicule; and it would be too much, not only to be thrashed out of the field, but to be laughed at into the bargain.

*Tor.* I thought, when you made a presentment of your sweet person to Miss Walsingham, that the bill would be returned ignoramus. [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE IV.—BELVILLE'S.

MRS BELVILLE, *and* LADY RACHEL MILDEW, *discovered on a sopha.*

*Lady Rach.* You heard what captain Savage said?

*Mrs Bel.* I would flatter myself, but my heart will not suffer it; the Park might be too full for the horrid purpose, and perhaps they are gone to decide the quarrel in some other place.

*Lady Rach.* The captain inquired of numbers in the Park, without hearing a syllable of them, and is therefore positive, that they are parted without doing any mischief.

*Mrs Bel.* I am, nevertheless, torn by a thousand apprehensions; and my fancy, with a gloomy kind of fondness, fastens on the most deadly. This very morning, I exultingly numbered myself in the catalogue of the happiest wives. Perhaps I am a wife no longer—perhaps, my little innocents, your unhappy father is this moment breathing his last sigh, and wishing, O, how vainly! that he had not preferred a guilty pleasure to his own life, to my eternal peace of mind, and your felicity!

*Enter* SPRUCE.

*Spruce.* Madam! madam! my master! my master!

*Mrs Bel.* Is he safe?

*Enter* BELVILLE.

*Bel.* My love!

*Mrs Bel.* O, Mr Belville! [*Faints.*

*Bel.* Assistance, quick!

*Lady Rach.* There she revives.

*Bel.* The angel softens! how this rends my heart!

*Mrs Bel.* O, Mr Belville, if you could conceive the agonies I have endured, you would avoid the possibility of another quarrel as long as you lived, out of common humanity.

*Bel.* My dearest creature, spare these tender reproaches! you know not how sufficiently I am punished to see you thus miserable.

*Lady Rach.* That's pleasant indeed, when you have yourself deliberately loaded her with affliction.

*Bel.* Pray, pray, lady Rachel, have a little mercy! Your poor humble servant has been a very naughty boy—but if you only forgive him this single time, he will never more deserve the rod of correction.

*Mrs Bel.* Since you are returned safe, I am happy. Excuse these foolish tears; they gush in spite of me.

*Bel.* How contemptible do they render me, my love!

*Lady Rach.* Come, my dear, you must turn your mind from this gloomy subject. Suppose we step up stairs, and communicate our pleasure to Miss Walsingham?

*Mrs Bel.* With all my heart! Adieu, recreant! [*Exeunt* MRS BEL. *and* LADY RACH.

*Bel.* I don't deserve such a woman, I don't deserve her: Yet, I believe, I am the first husband that ever found fault with a wife for having too much goodness.

*Enter* SPRUCE.

What's the matter?

*Spruce.* Your sister——

*Bel.* What of my sister?

*Spruce.* Sir, is eloped.

*Bel.* My sister!

*Spruce.* There is a letter left, sir, in which she says, that her motive was dislike to a match with captain Savage, as she has placed her affections unalterably on another gentleman.

*Bel.* Death and damnation!

*Spruce.* Mrs Moreland, your mother, is in the greatest distress, sir, and begs you will immediately go with the servant that brought the message; for he, observing the young lady's maid carrying some bundles out, a little suspiciously, thought there must be some scheme going on, and dogged a hackney coach, in which Miss Moreland went off, to the very house where it set her down.

*Bel.* Bring me to the servant, instantly—but don't let a syllable of this matter reach my wife's ears: her spirits are already too much agitated. [*Exit.*

*Spruce,* Zounds! we shall be paid home for the tricks we have played in other families. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to* CAPTAIN SAVAGE'S *lodgings.*

*Enter* CAPTAIN SAVAGE.

*Capt. Sav.* The vehemence of my resentment against this abandoned woman has certainly led me too far. I should not have acquainted her with my discovery of her baseness—no; if I had acted properly, I should have concealed all knowledge of the transaction till the very moment of her guilt, and then burst upon her when she was solacing with her paramour, in all the fulness of security. Now, if she should either alter her mind, with respect to going to the masquerade, or go in a different habit, to elude my observation, I not only lose the opportunity of exposing her, but give her time to plan some plausible excuse for her infamous letter to Belville.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* General Savage and Mr Torrington, sir.

*Capt. Sav.* You blockhead! why did you let them wait a moment?—What can be the meaning of this visit? [*Exit Servant.*

*Enter* GENERAL SAVAGE, *and* TORRINGTON.

*Gen. Sav.* I come, Horace, to talk to you about Miss Walsingham.

*Capt. Sav.* She's the most worthless woman existing, sir: I can convince you of it.

*Gen. Sav.* I have already changed my own opinion of her.

*Capt. Sav.* What, you have found her out yourself, sir?

*Tor.* Yes he has made a trifling discovery.

*Gen. Sav.* 'Sdeath! don't make me contemptible to my son. [*Aside to* TOR.

*Capt. Sav.* But, sir, what instance of her precious behaviour has come to your knowledge? For an hour has scarcely elapsed, since you thought her a miracle of goodness.

*Tor.* Ay, he has thought her a miracle of goodness within this quarter of an hour.

*Gen. Sav.* Why, she has a manner that would impose upon all the world.

*Capt. Sav.* Yes, but she has a manner also to undeceive the world thoroughly.

*Tor.* That we have found pretty recently. However, in this land of liberty, none are to be pronounced guilty, 'till they are positively convicted: I can't, therefore, find against Miss Walsingham, upon the bare strength of presumptive evidence.

*Capt. Sav.* Presumptive evidence!—hav'n't I promised you ocular demonstration?

*Tor.* Ay, but till we receive this demonstration, my good friend, we cannot give judgment.

*Capt. Sav.* Then I'll tell you at once, who is the object of her honourable affections.

*Gen. Sav.* Who—who?

*Capt. Sav.* What would you think if they were placed on Belville?

*Gen. Sav.* Upon Belville! has she deserted to him from the corps of virtue?

*Capt. Sav.* Yes, she wrote to him, desiring to be taken from the masquerade to some convenient scene of privacy; and, though I have seen the letter, she has the impudence to deny her own hand.

*Gen. Sav.* What a fiend is there then, disguised under the uniform of an angel!

*Tor.* The delicate creature, that was dying with confusion!

*Capt. Sav.* Only come with me to the masquerade, and you shall see Belville carry her off. 'Twas about the scandalous appointment with him I was speaking, when you conceived I treated her so rudely.

*Gen. Sav.* And you were only anxious to shew her in her real character to me, when I was so exceedingly offended with you?

*Capt. Sav.* Nothing else in the world, sir. I knew you would despise and detest her, the moment you were acquainted with her baseness.

*Gen. Sav.* How she brazened it out before my face, and what a regard she affected for your interest! I was a madman not to listen to your explanation.

*Tor.* Though you both talk this point well, I still see nothing but strong presumption against Miss Walsingham: Mistakes have already happened, mistakes may happen again; and I will not give up a lady's honour upon an evidence that would not cast a common pickpocket at the Old Bailey.

*Capt. Sav.* Come to the masquerade then, and be convinced.

*Gen. Sav.* Let us detach a party for dresses immediately. Yet remember, Torrington, that the punctuality of evidence, which is necessary in a court of law, is by no means requisite in a court of honour.

*Tor.* Perhaps it would be more to the honour of your honourable courts if it was. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE V.—*Changes to an apartment at* MRS CRAYON'S.

BELVILLE *behind, speaking to a maid.*

*Bel.* My dear, you must excuse me.

*Maid.* Indeed, sir, you must not go up stairs.

*Bel.* Indeed, but I will; the man is positive to the house, and I'll search every room in it, from the cellar to the garret, if I don't find the lady. James, don't stir from the street-door.

*Enter* BELVILE, *followed by the Maid.*

*Maid.* Sir, you are the strangest gentleman I ever met with in all my born days:—I wish my mistress was at home.

*Bel.* I am a strange fellow, my dear—But if your mistress was at home, I should take the liberty of peeping into the apartments.

*Maid.* Sir, there's company in that room; you can't go in there.

*Bel.* Now, that's the very reason I will go in.

*Maid.* This must be some great man, or he wou'dn't behave so obstropolous.

*Bel.* Good manners, by your leave a little. [*Forcing the door.*] Whoever my gentleman is, I'll call him to a severe reckoning:—I have just been call'd to one myself, for making free with another man's sister.

*Enter* LEESON, *followed by* CONNOLLY.

*Lee.* Who is it that dares commit an outrage upon this apartment?

*Con.* An Englishman's very lodging, ay, and an Irishman's too, I hope, is his castle;—an Irishman is an Englishman all the world over.

*Bel.* Mr Leeson!

*Maid.* O, we shall have murder! [*Running off.*

*Con.* Run into the room, my dear, and stay with the young lady. [*Exit Maid.*

*Lee.* And, Connolly, let nobody else into that room.

*Con.* Let me alone for that, honey, if this gentleman has fifty people.

*Lee.* Whence is it, Mr Belville, that you persecute me thus with injuries?

*Bel.* I am filled with astonishment!

*Con.* Faith, to speak the truth, you do look a little surprised.

*Lee.* Answer me, sir, what is the foundation of this new violence?

*Bel.* I am come, Mr Leeson, upon an affair, sir—

*Con.* The devil burn me, if he was half so much confounded a while ago, when there was a naked sword at his breast!

*Bel.* I am come, Mr Leeson, upon an affair, sir, that—How the devil shall I open to him, since the tables are so fairly turned upon me?

*Lee.* Dispatch, sir, for I have company in the next room.

*Bel.* A lady, I suppose?

*Lee.* Suppose it is, sir?

*Bel.* And the lady's name is Miss Moreland, isn't it, sir?

*Lee.* I can't see what business you have with her name, sir. You took away my sister, and I hope you have no designs upon the lady in the next room?

*Bel.* Indeed, but I have.

*Lee.* The devil you have!

*Con.* Well, this is the most unaccountable man I ever heard of: he'll have all the women in the town, I believe.

*Lee.* And pray, sir, what pretensions have you to the lady in the next room, even supposing her to be Miss Moreland?

*Bel.* No other pretensions than what a brother should have to the defence of his sister's honour: You thought yourself authorised to cut my throa a while ago, in a similar business.

*Lee.* And is Miss Moreland your sister?

*Bel.* Sir, there is insolence in the question; you know she is.

*Lee.* By heaven, I did not know it till this moment! but I rejoice at the discovery: This is blow for blow!

*Con.* Devil burn me but they have fairly made a swop of it!

*Bel.* And you really didn't know that Miss Moreland was my sister?

*Lee.* I don't conceive myself under much necessity of apologizing to you, sir; but I am incapable of a dishonourable design upon any woman; and though Miss Moreland, in our short acquaintance, repeatedly mentioned her brother, she never once told me, that his name was Belville.

*Con.* And he has had such few opportunities of being in her company, unless by letters, honey, that he knew nothing more of her connections, than her being a sweet pretty creature, and having thirty thousand pounds.

*Bel.* The fortune, I dare say, no way lessened the force of her attractions.

*Lee.* I am above dissimulation—It really did not.

*Bel.* Well, Mr Leeson, our families have shewn such a very strong inclination to come together, that it would really be a pity to disappoint them.

*Con.* Upon my soul and so it would! though the dread of being forced to have a husband, the young lady tells us, quickened her resolution to marry this gentleman.

*Bel.* O she had no violence of that kind to apprehend from her family; therefore, Mr Leeson, since you seem as necessary for the girl's happiness as she seems for yours, you shall marry her here in town, with the consent of all her friends, and save yourself the trouble of an expedition to Scotland.

*Lee.* Can I believe you serious?

*Bel.* Zounds, Leeson, that air of surprise is a sad reproach! I didn't surprise you, when I did a bad action, but I raise your astonishment, when I do a good one.

*Con.* And by my soul, Mr Belville, if you knew how a good action becomes a man, you'd never do a bad one as long as you lived.

*Lee.* You have given me life and happiness in one day, Mr Belville! however, it is now time you should see your sister. I know you will be gentle with her, though you have so much reason to condemn her choice, and generously remember, that her elopement proceeded from the great improbability there was of a beggar's ever meeting with the approbation of her family.

*Bel.* Don't apologize for your circumstances, Leeson; a princess could do no more than make you happy; and if you make her so, you meet her upon terms of the most perfect equality.

*Lee.* This is a new way of thinking, Mr Belville.

*Bel.* 'Tis only an honest way of thinking; and I consider my sister a gainer on the occasion; for a man of your merit is more difficult to be found, than a woman of her fortune.

[*Exeunt* LEESON *and* BELVILLE.

*Con.* What's the reason now, that I can't skip, and laugh, and rejoice, at this affair? Upon my soul, my heart's as full as if I had met with some great misfortune. Well, pleasure in the extreme is certainly a very painful thing; and I am really ashamed of these woman's drops, and yet I don't know but that I ought to blush for being ashamed of them; for I am sure nobody's eye looks ever half so well, as when it is disfigured by a tear of humanity. [*Exit.*

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—*A drawing-room.*

*Enter* BELVILLE.

*Bel.* WELL, happiness is once more mine, and the women are all going in tip-top spirits to the masquerade. Now, Mr Belville, let me have a few words with you. Miss Wassingham, the ripe, the luxurious Miss Walsingham, expects to find you there burning with impatience—But, my dear friend, after the occurrences of the day, can you be weak enough to plunge into fresh crimes? Can you be base enough to abuse the goodness of that angel your wife; and wicked enough, not only to destroy the innocence, which is sheltered beneath your own roof, but to expose your family, perhaps, again to the danger of losing a son, a brother, a father, and a husband? The possession of the three Graces is surely too poor a recompense for the folly you must commit, for the shame you must feel, and the consequence you must hazard. Upon my soul, if I struggle a little longer, I shall rise in my own opinion, and be less a rascal than I think myself:—Ah, but the object is bewitching—the matter will be an eternal secret—and if it is known that I sneak in this pitiful manner from a fine woman, when the whole elysium of her person solicits me!—well, and am I afraid the world should know that I have shrunk from an infamous action?—A thousand blessings on you, dear conscience, for that one argument—I shall be an honest man after all. Suppose, however, that I give her the meeting? that's dangerous—that's dangerous:—and I am so little accustomed to do what is right, that I shall certainly do what is wrong, the moment I am in the way of temptation. Come, Belville, your resolution is not so very slender a dependence; and you owe Miss Walsingham repara-

tion for the injury which you have done her principles. I'll give her the meeting—I'll take her to the house I intended—I'll—Zounds! what a fool I have been all this time, to look for precarious satisfaction in vice, when there is such exquisite pleasure to a certainty to be found in virtue! [*Exit* BEL.

*Enter* LADY RACHEL *and* MRS BELVILLE.

*Lady Rach.* For mirth's sake, don't let him see us: There has been a warm debate between his passion and his conscience.

*Mrs Bel.* And the latter is the conqueror, my life for it.

*Lady Rach.* Dear Mrs Belville, you are the best of women, and ought to have the best of husbands.

*Mrs Bel.* I have the best of husbands.

*Lady Rach.* I have not time to dispute the matter with you now; but I shall put you into my comedy, to teach wives, that the best receipt for matrimonial happiness, is to be deaf, dumb, and blind.

*Mrs Bel.* Poh, poh! you are are a satirist, lady Rachel!—But we are losing time; should not we put on our dresses, and prepare for the grand scene?

*Lady Rach.* Don't you tremble at the trial?

*Mrs Bel.* Not in the least; I am sure my heart has no occasion.

*Lady Rach.* Have you let Miss Walsingham into our little plot?

*Mrs Bel.* You know she could not be insensible of Mr Belville's design upon herself; and it it is no farther than that design, we have any thing to carry into execution.

*Lady Rach.* Well, she may serve to facilitate the matter; and, therefore, I am not sorry that you have trusted her.

*Mrs Bel.* We shall be too late; and, then, what signifies all your fine plotting?

*Lady Rach.* Is it not a little pang of jealousy that would fain quicken our motions?

*Mrs Bel.* No, lady Rachel, it is a certainty of my husband's love and generosity, that makes me wish to come to the trial. I would not exchange my confidence in his affection for all the mines of Peru; so, nothing you can say can make me miserable.

*Lady Rach.* You are a most unaccountable woman; so, away with you. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter* SPRUCE *and* GHASTLY.

*Spruce.* Why, Ghastly, the old general, your master, is a greater fool than I ever thought he was: He wants to marry Miss Walsingham.

*Ghast.* Mrs Tempest suspected that there was something going forward, by all his hugger-mugger consulting with Mr Torrington: and so set me on to listen.

*Spruce.* She's a good friend of yours; and that thing she made the general give you the other day in the hospital, is, I suppose, a snug hundred a-year.

*Ghast.* Better than two; I wash for near four thousand people: there was a major of horse who put in for it, and pleaded a large family—

*Spruce.* With long service, I suppose?

*Ghast.* Yes; but Mrs Tempest insisted upon my long services; so the major was set aside—However, to keep the thing from the damned news-papers, I fancy he will succeed the barber, who died last night, poor woman, of a lying-in-fever, after being brought to bed of three children.—Places in public institutions—

*Spruce.* Are often sweetly disposed of: I think of asking Belville for something, one of these days.

*Ghast* He has great interest.

*Spruce.* I might be a justice of peace, if I pleased, and in a shabby neighbourhood, where the mere swearing would bring in something tolerable: but there are so many strange people let into the commission now a-days, that I shou'dn't like to have my name in the list.

*Ghast.* You are right.

*Spruce.* No, no; I leave that to paltry tradesmen, and shall think of some little sinecure, or a small pension on the Irish establishment.

*Ghast.* Well, success attend you! I must hobble home as fast as I can, to know if Mrs Tempest has any orders. O, there's a rare storm brewing for our old goat of a general!

*Spruce.* When shall we crack a bottle together?

*Ghast.* O, I shan't touch a glass of claret these three weeks; for last night I gave nature a little filip with a drunken bout, according to the doctor's directions. I have entirely left off bread, and I am in great hopes that I shall get rid of the gout by these means, especially if I can learn to eat my meat quite raw, like a cannibal.

*Spruce.* Ha, ha, ha!

*Ghast.* Look at me, Spruce; I was once as likely a young fellow as any under ground in the whole parish of St James's:—but waiting on the general so many years—

*Spruce.* Ay, and following his example, Ghastly?

*Ghast.* 'Tis too true—has reduced me to what you see. These miserable spindles would do very well for a lord or a duke, Spruce; but they are a sad disgrace to a poor valet de chambre. [*Exit.*

*Spruce.* Well, I don't believe there's a gentleman's gentleman, within the weekly bills, who joins a prudent solicitude for the main chance, to a strict care of his constitution, better than myself. I have a little girl, who stands me in about three guineas a week. I never bet more than a pound upon a rubber of whist; I always sleep with my head very warm; and swallow a new-laid egg every morning with my chocolate. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Changes to the street. Two chairs cross the stage, knock at a door, and set down* BELVILLE *and a lady.*

*Bel.* This way, my dear creature! [*Exeunt.*

*Enter* GENERAL SAVAGE, CAPTAIN SAVAGE, *and* TORRINGTON.

*Capt. Sav.* There! there they go in! You see the place is quite convenient, not twenty yards from the masquerade.

*Gen. Sav.* How closely the fellow sticks to her!

*Tor.* Like the great seal to the peerage patent of a chancellor. But, gentlemen, we have still no more than proof presumptive:—where is the ocular demonstration which we were to have?

*Capt. Sav.* I'll swear to the blue domino; 'tis a very remarkable one, and so is Belville's.

*Tor.* You would have rare custom among the Newgate solicitors, if you'd venture an oath upon the identity of the party under it.

*Gen. Sav.* 'Tis the very size and shape of Miss Walsingham.

*Tor.* And yet, I have a strange notion that there is a trifling *alibi* in this case.

*Gen. Sav.* It would be a damned affair if we should be countermined.

*Capt. Sav.* O, follow me! here's the door left luckily open, and I'll soon clear up the matter beyond a question. [*Enters the house.*

*Tor.* Why your son is mad, general. This must produce a deadly breach with Belville. For Heaven's sake, let us go in, and prevent any excesses of his rashness.

*Gen. Sav.* By all means, or the poor fellow's generous anxiety on my account may be productive of very fatal consequences. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*Changes to an apartment.*

BELVILLE *unmasked, and a lady in a blue domino, masked.*

*Bel.* My dear Miss Walsingham, we are now perfectly safe; yet I will by no means entreat you to unmask, because I am convinced, from the propriety with which you repulsed my addresses this morning, that you intend the present interview should make me still more deeply sensible of my presumption.——I never lied so aukwardly in all my life. If it was to make her comply, I should be at no loss for language. [*Aside.*] The situation in which I must appear before you, madam, is certainly a very humiliating one; but I am persuaded that your generosity will be gratified to hear, that I have bid an everlasting adieu to my profligacies, and am now only alive to the virtues of Mrs Belville.—She won't speak—I don't wonder at it; for, brazen as I am myself, if I met so mortifying a rejection, I should be cursedly out of countenance. [*Aside.*

*Capt. Sav.* [*Behind*] I will go in.

*Gen. Sav.* [*Behind.*] I command you to desist.

*Tor.* [*Behind.*] This will be an affair for the Old Bailey.

[*The noise grows more violent, and continues.*

*Bel.* Why, what the devil is all this?—Don't be alarmed, Miss Walsingham; be assured I'll protect you, at the hazard of my life;—step into this closet——you sha'n't be discovered, depend upon it—[*She goes in.*]—And now to find out the cause of this confusion. [*Unlocks the door.*

*Enter* GENERAL SAVAGE, CAPTAIN SAVAGE, *and* TORRINGTON.

Savage! what is the meaning of this strange behaviour?

*Capt. Sav.* Where is Miss Walsingham?

*Bel.* So, then, sir, this is a premeditated scheme, for which I am obliged to your friendship.

*Capt. Sav.* Where's Miss Walsingham, sir?

*Gen. Sav.* Dear Belville, he is out of his senses!——this storm was intirely against my orders.

*Tor.* If he proceeds much longer in these vagaries, we must amuse him with a commission of lunacy.

*Bel.* This is neither a time nor place for argument, Mr Torrington; but as you and the general seem to be in the possession of your senses, I shall be glad if you'll take this very friendly gentleman away; and depend upon it, I sha'n't die in his debt for the present obligation.

*Capt. Sav.* And depend upon it, sir, pay the obligation when you will, I sha'n't stir till I see Miss Walsingham.——Look'e, Belville, there are secret reasons for my behaving in this manner; reasons which you yourself will approve, when you know them;—my father here——

*Gen. Sav.* Disavows your conduct in every particular, and would rejoice to see you at the halberds.

*Tor.* And, for my part, I told him previously 'twas a downright burglary.

*Bel.* Well, gentlemen, let your different motives for breaking in upon me in this disagreeable manner be what they may, I don't see that I am less annoyed by my friends than my enemy. I must therefore again request, that you will all walk down stairs.

*Capt. Sav.* I'll first walk into this room.

*Bel.* Really, I think you will not.

*Gen. Sav.* What frenzy possesses the fellow to urge this matter farther?

*Capt. Sav.* While there's a single doubt, she triumphs over justice.—[*Drawing.*]—I will go into that room.

*Bel.* Then you must make your way through me.

*Enter the* LADY *masked.*

*Mask.* Ah!

*Capt Sav.* There! I knew she was in the room:—there's the blue domino.

*Gen. Sav.* Put up your sword, if you don't desire to be cashiered from my favour for ever.

*Bel.* Why would you come out, madam? But you have nothing to apprehend.

*Capt. Sav.* Pray, madam, will you have the goodness to unmask?

*Bel.* She sha'n't unmask.

*Capt. Sav.* I say, she shall.

*Bel.* I say, she shall not.

*Mask.* Pray, let me oblige the gentleman?

*Capt. Sav.* Death and destruction, here's a discovery!

*Gen. Sav. and Tor.* Mrs Belville!

*Mrs Bel.* Yes, Mrs Belville, gentlemen: Is conjugal fidelity so very terrible a thing now-a-days, that a man is to suffer death for being found in company with his own wife!

*Bel.* My love, this is a surprise indeed—but it is a most agreeable one; since you find me really ashamed of my former follies, and cannot now doubt the sincerity of my reformation.

*Mrs Bel.* I am too happy! This single moment would overpay a whole life of anxiety.

*Bel.* Where shall I attend you? Will you return to the masquerade?

*Mrs Bel.* O no!——Lady Rachel and Miss Walsingham are by this time at our house, with Mr Leeson and the Irish gentleman, whom you pressed into our party, impatiently expecting the result of this adventure.

*Bel.* Give me leave to conduct you home, then, from this scene of confusion. To-morrow, captain Savage, I shall beg the favour of your explanation. [*Aside to him as he goes out.*] Kind gentlemen, your most humble servant.

*Mrs Bel.* And when you next disturb a tete-a-tete, for pity to a poor wife, don't let it be so very uncustomary a party as a matrimonial one.

[*Exeunt* BELVILLE *and* MRS BELVILLE.

*Gen. Sav.* [*To* CAPTAIN SAVAGE.] So, sir, you have led us upon a blessed expedition here!

*Tor.* Now, don't you think that if your courts of honour, like our courts of law, searched a little minutely into evidence, it would be equally to the credit of their understandings?

*Capt. Sav.* Though I am covered with confusion at my mistake (for you see Belville was mastaken as well as myself) I am overjoyed at this discovery of Miss Walsingham's innocence.

*Gen. Sav.* I should exult in it too, with a feu de joie, if it don't now shew the impossibility of her ever being Mrs Savage.

*Capt. Sav.* Dear sir, why should you think that an impossibility? Though some mistakes have occured, in consequence, I suppose, of Mrs Belville's little plot upon her husband, I dare say Miss Walsingham may yet be prevailed upon to come into our family.

*Tor.* Take care of a new error in your proceedings, young gentleman.

*Gen. Sav.* Ay, another defeat would make us completely despicable.

*Capt. Sav.* Sir, I'll forfeit my life, if she does not consent to the marriage this very night.

*Gen. Sav.* Only bring this matter to bear, and I'll forgive you every thing.

*Tor.* The captain should be informed, I think, general, that she declined it peremptorily this evening.

*Gen. Sav.* Ay, do you hear that, Horace?

*Capt. Sav.* I am not at all surprised at it, considering the general misconception we laboured under. But I'll immediately to Belville's, explain the whole mystery, and conclude every thing to your satisfaction. [*Exit.*

*Gen. Sav.* So, Torrington, we shall be able to take the field again, you see.

*Tor.* But how, in the name of wonder, has your son found out your intention of marrying Miss Walsingham? I looked upon myself as the only person acquainted with the secret.

*Gen. Sav.* That thought has marched itself two or three times to my own recollection. For though I gave him some distant hints of the affair, I took particular care to keep behind the works of a proper circumspection.

*Tor.* O, if you gave him any hints at all, I am not surprised at his discovering every thing.

*Gen. Sav.* I shall be all impatience till I hear of his interview with Miss Walsingham. Suppose, my dear friend, we went to Belville's? 'tis but in the next street, and we shall be there in the lighting of a match.

*Tor.* Really, this is a pretty business for a man of my age and profession—trot here, trot there. But, as I have been weak enough to make myself a kind of party in the cause, I own that I have curiosity enough to be anxious about the determination.

*Gen. Sav.* Come along, my old boy; and remember the song. '*Servile spirits,*' &c.

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*Changes to* BELVILLE'S.

*Enter* CAPTAIN SAVAGE *and* MISS WALSINGHAM.

*Capt. Sav.* Nay, but, my dearest Miss Walsingham, the extenuation of my own conduct to Belville made it absolutely necessary for me to discover my engagements with you; and, as happiness is now so fortunately in our reach, I flatter myself you will be prevailed upon to forgive an error, which proceeded only from an extravagancy of love.

*Miss Wal.* To think me capable of such an action, captain Savage! I am terrified at the idea of a union with you; and it is better for a woman, at any time, to sacrifice an insolent lover, than to accept of a suspicious husband.

*Capt. Sav.* In the happiest unions, my dearest creature, there must be always something to overlook on both sides.

*Miss Wal.* Very civil, truly!

*Capt. Sav.* Pardon me, my life, for this frankness! and recollect, that if the lover has, through misconception, been unhappily guilty, he brings a husband altogether reformed to your hands.

*Miss Wal.* Well, I see I must forgive you at last; so I may as well make merit of necessity, you provoking creature.

*Capt. Sav.* And may I hope, indeed, for the blessing of this hand?

*Miss Wal.* Why, you wretch, would you have me force it upon you? I think, after what I have said, a soldier might have ventured to take it, without further ceremony.

*Capt. Sav.* Angelic creature! thus I seize it, as my lawful prize.

*Miss Wal.* Well, but now you have obtained this inestimable prize, captain, give me again leave to ask, if you have had a certain explanation with the general?

*Capt. Sav.* How can you doubt it?

*Miss Wal.* And he is really impatient for our marriage?

*Capt. Sav.* 'Tis incredible how earnest he is.

*Miss Wal.* What, did he tell you of his interview with me this evening, when he brought Mr Torrington?

*Capt. Sav.* He did.

*Miss Wal.* O, then I can have no doubt.

*Capt. Sav.* If a shadow of doubt remains, here he comes to remove it. Joy! my dear sir! joy a thousand times!

*Enter* GENERAL SAVAGE *and* TORRINGTON.

*Gen. Sav.* What, my dear boy, have you carried the day?

*Miss Wal.* I have been weak enough to indulge him with a victory, indeed, general.

*Gen. Sav.* [*Singing.*]

*None but the brave, none but the brave, &c.*

*Tor.* I congratulate you heartily on this decree, general.

*Gen. Sav.* This had nearly proved a day of disappointment; but the stars have fortunately turned it in my favour, and now I reap the rich reward of my victory. [*Salutes her.*

*Capt. Sav.* And here I take her from you, as the greatest good which Heaven can send me.

*Miss Wal.* O, captain!

*Gen. Sav.* You take her as the greatest good which Heaven can send you, sirrah! I take her as the greatest good which Heaven can send me! And now, what have you to say to her?

*Miss Wal.* General Savage!

*Tor.* Here will be a fresh injunction to stop proceedings.

*Miss Wal.* Are you never to have done with mistakes?

*Gen. Sav.* What mistakes can have happened now, my sweetest? you delivered up your dear hand to me this moment?

*Miss Wal.* True, sir; but I thought you were going to bestow my dear hand upon this dear gentleman.

*Gen. Sav.* How! that dear gentleman!

*Capt. Sav.* I am thunderstruck!

*Tor.* General—[*Sings.*]

*None but the brave, &c.*

*Gen. Sav.* So! the covert way is cleared at last; and you have imagined that I was all along negociating for this fellow, when I was gravely soliciting for myself?

*Miss Wal.* No other idea, sir, ever once entered my imagination.

*Tor.* General. [*Sings.*]

*Noble minds shall ne'er despair, &c.*

*Gen. Sav.* Zounds! here's all the company pouring upon us in full gallop, and I shall be the laughing-stock of the whole town.

*Enter* BELVILLE, MRS BELVILLE, LADY RACHEL, LEESON, *and* CONOLLY.

*Bel.* Well, general, we have left you a long time together. Shall I give you joy?

*Gen. Sav.* No: wish me demolished in the fortifications of Dunkirk.

*Mrs Bel.* What's the matter?

*Lady Rach.* The general appears disconcerted.

*Lee.* The gentleman looks as if he had fought a hard battle.

*Con.* Ay, and gained nothing but a defeat, my dear.

*Tor.* I'll shew cause for his behaviour.

*Gen. Sav.* Death and damnation! not for the world! I am taken by surprise here; let me consider a moment how to cut my way through the enemy.

*Miss Wal.* How could you be deceived in this manner? [*To the* CAPT.

*Lady Rach.* O, Mr Torrington! we are much obliged to you; you have been in town ever since last night, and only see us now by accident.

*Tor.* I have been very busy, madam; but you look sadly, very sadly, indeed! your old disorder the jaundice, I suppose, has been very troublesome to you?

*Lady Rach.* Sir, you have a very extraordinary mode of complimenting your acquaintance.

*Con.* I don't believe, for all that, that there's a word of a lie in the truth he speaks. [*Aside.*

*Lee.* Mr Torrington, your most obedient—— You received my letter, I hope?

*Tor.* What, my young barrister! Have you any more traders from Dantzick to be naturalized?

*Con.* Let us only speak to you in private; and

we'll there clear up the affair before the whole company.

*Tor.* [*Speaking apart to* LEESON *and* CON.]—This gentleman's letter has already cleared it up to my entire satisfaction; and I don't know whether I am most pleased with his wit, or charmed with his probity. However, Mr Leeson, I used the bailiffs sadly. Bailiffs are generally sad fellows to be sure; but we must love justice for our own sakes.

*Lee.* Unquestionably, sir; and they shall be amply recompensed for the merit of their sufferings.

*Con.* And the merit of suffering, I fancy, is the only merit that is ever likely to fall to the share of a sheriff's officer.

*Tor.* One word—one word more, Mr Leeson. I have inquired your character, and like it——like it much. Forgive the forwardness of an old man. You must not want money——you must not, indeed———

*Lee.* Sir———

*Tor.* Pray don't be offended—I mean to give my friends but little trouble about my affairs when I am gone. I love to see the people happy that my fortune is to make so; and shall think it a treason against humanity to leave a shilling more than the bare expences of my funeral. Breakfast with me in the morning.

*Lee.* You overwhelm me with this generosity; but a happy revolution in my fortunes, which you will soon know, renders it wholly unnecessary for me to trouble you.

*Con.* [*Wiping his eyes.*] Upon my soul, this is a most worthy old crater—to be his own executor. If I was to live any long time among such people, they would soon be the death of me, with their very goodness.

*Mrs Bel.* Miss Walsingham, captain Savage has been telling Mr Belville and me of a very extraordinary mistake.

*Miss Wal.* 'Tis very strange, indeed; mistake on mistake.

*Bel.* 'Tis no way strange to find every body properly struck with the merit of Miss Walsingham.

*Miss Wal.* A compliment from you, now, Mr Belville, is really worth accepting.

*Gen. Sav.* If I thought the affair could be kept a secret, by making the town over to my son, since I am utterly shut out myself———

*Capt. Sav.* He seems exceedingly embarrassed.

*Gen. Sav.* If I thought that—why, mortified as I must be in giving it up, I think I could resolve upon the manœuvre, to save myself from universal ridicule: but it can't be; it can't be; and I only double my own disappointment in rewarding the disobedience of the rascal who has supplanted me. There! there! they are all talking of it, all laughing at me, and I shall run mad.

*Mrs Tem.* [*Behind.*] I say, you feather-headed puppy, he is in this house; my own servant saw him come in, and I will not stir till I find him.

*Gen. Sav.* She here! then, deliberation is over, and I am entirely blown up.

*Lady Rach.* I'll take notes of this affair.

*Enter* MRS TEMPLE.

*Mrs Tem.* Mighty well, sir! So you are in love, it seems? and you want to be married, it seems?

*Lee.* My blessed aunt! O, how proud I am of the relation!

*Gen. Sav.* Dear Bab, give me quarter before all this company.

*Mrs Tem.* You are in love, you old fool, are you? and you want to marry Miss Walsingham, indeed!

*Con.* I never heard a pleasanter spoken gentlewoman———O honey, if I had the taming of her, she should never be abusive, without keeping a civil tongue in her head.

*Mrs Tem.* Well, sir, and when is the happy day to be fixed?

*Bel.* What the devil, is this true, general?

*Gen.* True—Can you believe such an absurdity?

*Mrs Tem.* Why, will you deny, you miserable old mummy, that you made proposals of marriage to her?

*Gen. Sav.* Yes I do—no, I don't—proposals of marriage!

*Miss Wal.* In favour of your son—I'll help him out a little. [*Aside.*

*Gen. Sav.* Yes, in favour of my son——what the devil shall I do?

*Mrs Bel.* Shall I take a lesson from this lady, Mr Belville? Perhaps, if the women of virtue were to pluck up a little spirit, they might be soon as well treated as kept mistresses.

*Mrs Temp.* Hark'e, general Savage, I believe you assert a falsehood; but if you speak the truth, give your son this moment to Miss Walsingham, and let me be fairly rid of my rival.

*Gen. Sav.* My son! Miss Walsingham! Miss Walsingham, my son!

*Bel.* It will do, Horace; it will do.

*Mrs Tem.* No prevarications, general Savage! Do what I bid you instantly, or, by all the wrongs of an enraged woman, I'll so expose you!——

*Con.* What a fine fellow this is to have the command of an army!

*Gen. Sav.* If Miss Walsingham can be prevailed upon——

*Tor.* O, she'll oblige you readily—but you must settle a good fortune upon your son.

*Mrs Tem.* That he shall do.

*Mrs Bel.* Miss Walsingham, my dear———

*Miss Wal.* I can refuse nothing either to your request, or to the request of the general.

*Gen. Sav.* Oblige me with your hand, then, ma-

dam: come here, you——come here, captain.—There, there is Miss Walsingham's hand for you.

*Con.* And as pretty a little fist it is, as any in the three kingdoms.

*Gen. Sav.* Torrington shall settle the fortune.

*Lee.* I give you joy, most heartily, madam.

*Bel.* We all give her joy.

*Capt. Sav.* Mine is beyond the power of expression.

*Miss Wal.* [*Aside to the company.*] And so is the general's, I believe.

*Con.* O, faith, that may be easily seen, by the sweetness of his countenance.

*Tor.* Well, the cause being now, at last, determined, I think we may all retire from the court.

*Gen. Sav.* And without any great credit, I fear, to the general.

*Con.* By my soul, you may say that!

*Mrs Tem.* Do you murmur, sir? Come this moment home with me.

*Gen. Sav.* I'll go any where to hide this miserable head of mine: what a damned campaign have I made of it!

[*Exeunt* GENERAL SAVAGE *and* MRS TEMPEST.

*Con.* Upon my soul, if I was in the general's place, I would divide the house with this devil; I would keep within doors myself, and make her take the outside.

*Lady Rach.* Here's more food for a comedy.

*Lee.* So there is, madam; and Mr Torrington, to whose goodness I am infinitely obliged, could tell you some diverting anecdotes, that would enrich a comedy considerably.

*Con.* Ay, faith, and a tragedy, too!

*Tor.* I can tell nothing but what will redound to the credit of your character, young man.

*Bel.* The day has been a busy one, thanks to the communicative disposition of the captain.

*Mrs Bel.* And the evening should be cheerful.

*Bel.* I shan't, therefore, part with one of you, till we have had a hearty laugh at our general adventures.

*Miss Wal.* They have been very whimsical, indeed; yet, if represented on the stage, I hope they would be found not only entertaining, but instructive.

*Lady Rach.* Instructive! why the modern critics say, that the only business of comedy is to make people laugh.

*Bel.* That is degrading the dignity of letters exceedingly, as well as lessening the utility of the stage. A good comedy is a capital effort of genius, and should, therefore, be directed to the noblest purposes.

*Miss Wal.* Very true; and unless we learn something while we chuckle, the carpenter, who nails a pantomime together, will be entitled to more applause, than the best comic poet in the kingdom. [*Exeunt omnes.*

# THE

# RIVALS.

BY

*SHERIDAN.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### MEN.

SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE.
CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE, *his son, attached to* LYDIA LANGUISH.
FAULKLAND, *attached to* JULIA.
ACRES, *a country squire.*
SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER, *an Irishman.*
FAG, *servant to* CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.
DAVID, *servant to* ACRES.
*Coachman to* SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE.

### WOMEN.

MRS MALAPROP, *attached to* SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.
LYDIA LANGUISH, *niece to* MRS MALAPROP.
JULIA, *attached to* FAULKLAND.
LUCY, *maid to* MISS LANGUISH.

*Maid, Boy, Servants, &c.*

*Scene—Bath.*

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—*A street in Bath.*

*Coachman crosses the stage—Enter* FAG, *looking after him.*

*Fag.* WHAT! Thomas! Sure 'tis he?—What! Thomas! Thomas!

*Coach.* Hey! Odds life! Mr Fag! give us your hand, my old fellow-servant.

*Fag.* Excuse my glove, Thomas!—I'm devilish glad to see you, my lad: why, my prince of charioteers, you look as hearty!—But who the deuce thought of seeing you in Bath!

*Coach.* Sure, master, Madam Julia, Harry, Mrs Kate, and the postillion, be all come.

*Fag.* Indeed!

*Coach.* Av! Master thought another fit of the gout was coming to make him a visit; so he'd a mind to gi't the slip, and whip! we were all off at an hour's warning.

*Fag.* Ay, ay! hasty in every thing, or it would not be sir Anthony Absolute.

*Coach.* But tell us, Mr Fag, how does young master? Odd! sir Anthony will stare to see the captain here!

*Fag.* I do not serve captain Absolute now.

*Coach.* Why, sure!

*Fag.* At present I am employed by ensign Beverley.

*Coach.* I doubt, Mr Fag, you ha'n't changed for the better.

*Fag.* I have not changed, Thomas.

*Coach.* No! why, didn't you say you had left young master!

*Fag.* No. Well, honest Thomas, I must puzzle

you no farther—briefly then—Captain Absolute and ensign Beverley are one and the same person.

*Coach.* The devil they are!

*Fag.* So it is indeed, Thomas; and the ensign-half of my master being on guard at present—the captain has nothing to do with me.

*Coach.* So, so! what, this is some freak, I warrant! Do tell us, Mr Fag, the meaning o't—you know I ha' trusted you.

*Fag.* You'll be secret, Thomas?

*Coach.* As a coach-horse.

*Fag.* Why, then, the cause of all this is—love—love, Thomas, who (as you may get read to you) has been a masquerader ever since the days of Jupiter.

*Coach.* Ay, ay; I guessed there was a lady in the case: but pray, why does your master pass only for ensign? now, if he had shammed general indeed———

*Fag.* Ah! Thomas, there lies the mystery of the matter. Hark'e, Thomas; my master is in love with a lady of a very singular taste: a lady, who likes him better as a half-pay ensign, than if she knew he was son and heir to sir Anthony Absolute, a baronet of three thousand a-year.

*Coach.* That is an odd taste indeed!—but has she got the stuff, Mr Fag? is she rich, hey?

*Fag.* Rich! why, I believe she owns half the stocks! Zounds! Thomas, she could pay the national debt as easily as I could my washerwoman! She has a lap-dog that eats out of gold; she feeds her parrot with small pearls; and all her thread papers are made of bank-notes!

*Coach.* Bravo! faith! Odd! I warrant she has a set of thousands at least: but does she draw kindly with the captain?

*Fag.* As fond as pigeons.

*Coach.* May one hear her name?

*Fag.* Miss Lydia Languish. But there is an old tough aunt in the way; though, by the by, she has never seen my master; for he got acquainted with miss while on a visit in Gloucestershire.

*Coach.* Well, I wish they were once harnessed together in matrimony. But pray, Mr Fag, what kind of a place is this Bath? I ha' heard a deal of it; here's a mort o' merry making—hey?

*Fag.* Pretty well, Thomas, pretty well; 'tis a good lounge: In the morning we go to the pump-room (though neither my master nor I drink the waters); after breakfast, we saunter on the parades, or play a game at billiards; at night we dance: but damn the place, I'm tired of it; their regular hours stupify me! not a fiddle nor a card after eleven! however, Mr Faulkland's gentleman and I keep it up a little in private parties. I'll introduce you there, Thomas; you'll like him much.

*Coach.* Sure I know Mr Du-Peign; you know his master is to marry madam Julia.

*Fag.* I had forgot. But, Thomas, you must polish a little; indeed you must——Here, now, this wig! what the devil do you do with a wig, Thomas? none of the London whips of any degree of ton wear wigs now.

*Coach.* More's the pity! more's the pity, I say! Odd's life! when I heard how the lawyers and doctors had took to their own hair, I thought how 'twould go next: Odd rabbit it! when the fashion had got foot on the bar, I guessed 'twould mount to the box! but 'tis all out of character, believe me, Mr Fag: and look'ee, I'll never gi' up mine; the lawyers and doctors may do as they will.

*Fag.* Well, Thomas, we'll not quarrel about that.

*Coach.* Why, bless you, the gentlemen of they professions ben't all of a mind; for, in our village now, thof Jack Gauge, the exciseman, has ta'en to his carrots, there's little Dick, the farrier, swears he'll never forsake bis bob, though all the college should appear with their own heads!

*Fag.* Indeed! well said, Dick! but hold—mark! mark! Thomas.

*Coach.* Zooks! 'tis the captain! Is that the lady with him?

*Fag.* No, no! that is madam Lucy, my master's mistress's maid. They lodge at that house. But I must after him, to tell him the news.

*Coach.* Odd! he's giving her money! well, Mr Fag——

*Fag.* Good by, Thomas! I have an appointment in Gyde's Porch this evening at eight; meet me there, and we'll make a little party.

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—*A dressing-room in* MRS MALAPROP'S *lodgings.*

LYDIA *sitting on a sopha, with a book in her hand.*

*Enter* LUCY, *as just returned from a message.*

*Lucy.* Indeed, ma'am, I traversed half the town in search of it: I don't believe there's a circulating library in Bath I ha'n't been at.

*Lydia.* And could not you get 'The Reward of Constancy?'

*Lucy.* No, indeed, ma'am.

*Lydia.* Nor 'The Fatal Connection?'

*Lucy.* No, indeed, ma'am.

*Lydia.* Nor 'The Mistakes of the Heart!'

*Lucy.* Ma'am, as ill luck would have it, Mr Bull said Miss Sukey Saunter had just fetched it away.

*Lydia.* Heigh-ho!—Did you inquire for 'The Delicate Distress?'

*Lucy.* ——— Or, 'The Memoirs of Lady Woodford?' Yes indeed, ma'am. I asked every where for it; and I might have brought it from Mr Frederick's; but lady Slattern Lounger, who

had just sent it home, had so soiled and dog's-eared it, it wa'n't fit for a christian to read.

*Lydia.* Heigh-ho!—Yes, I always know when Lady Slattern has been before me. She has a most observing thumb; and, I believe, cherishes her nails for the convenience of making marginal notes. Well, child, what have you brought me?

*Lucy.* Oh! here, ma'am.

[*Taking books from under her cloak, and from her pockets.*

This is 'The Gordian Knot,' and this 'Peregrine Pickle.' Here are 'The Tears of Sensibility,' and 'Humphrey Clinker.' This is 'The Memoirs of a Lady of Quality, written by herself,' and here the second volume of 'The Sentimental Journey.'

*Lydia.* Heigh-ho! What are those books by the glass?

*Lucy.* The great one is only 'The Whole Duty of Man,' where I press a few blonds, ma'am.

*Lydia.* Very well. Give me the sal volatile.

*Lucy.* Is it in a blue cover, ma'am?

*Lydia.* My smelling bottle, you simpleton!

*Lucy.* O, the drops! here, ma'am.

*Lydia.* Hold! here's some one coming—quick, see who it is—— [*Exit* LUCY.

Surely I heard my cousin Julia's voice!

*Re-enter* LUCY.

*Lucy.* Lud! ma'am, here is Miss Melville!

*Lydia.* Is it possible?——

*Enter* JULIA.

My dearest Julia, how delighted am I! [*Embrace.*] How unexpected was this happiness!

*Julia.* True, Lydia; and our pleasure is the greater; but what has been the matter? You were denied to me at first!

*Lydia.* Ah, Julia, I have a thousand things to tell you! but first inform me what has conjured you to Bath? Is sir Anthony here?

*Julia.* He is; we are arrived within this hour; and, I suppose, he will be here to wait on Mrs Malaprop as soon as he is dressed.

*Lydia.* Then, before we are interrupted, let me impart to you some of my distress! I know your gentle nature will sympathize with me, though your prudence may condemn me: My letters have informed you of my whole connection with Beverley—but I have lost him, Julia! My aunt has discovered our intercourse, by a note she intercepted, and has confined me ever since. Yet, would you believe it? she has fallen absolutely in love with a tall Irish baronet she met one night since we have been here, at lady Macshuffle's rout.

*Julia.* You jest, Lydia?

*Lydia.* No, upon my word! She really carries on a kind of correspondence with him, under a feigned name though, till she chooses to be known to him—But it is a Delia or a Celia, I assure you!

*Julia.* Then, surely, she is now more indulgent to her niece?

*Lydia.* Quite the contrary. Since she has discovered her own frailty, she is become more suspicious of mine. Then I must inform you of another plague! That odious Acres is to be in Bath to-day; so that I protest I shall be teased out of all spirits!

*Julia.* Come, come, Lydia, hope for the best. Sir Anthony shall use his interest with Mrs Malaprop.

*Lydia.* But you have not heard the worst: Unfortunately I had quarrelled with my poor Beverley, just before my aunt made the discovery, and I have not seen him since, to make it up.

*Julia.* What was his offence?

*Lydia.* Nothing at all! But, I don't know how it was, as often as we had been together, we had never had a quarrel: And, somehow, I was afraid he would never give me an opportunity. So, last Thursday, I wrote a letter to myself, to inform myself that Beverley was at that time paying his addresses to another woman. I signed it 'Your Friend Unknown,' shewed it to Beverley, charged him with his falsehood, put myself in a violent passion, and vowed I'd never see him more.

*Julia.* And you let him depart so, and have not seen him since?

*Lydia.* 'Twas the next day my aunt found the matter out. I intended only to have teased him three days and a half, and now I've lost him for ever.

*Julia.* If he is as deserving and sincere as you have represented him to me, he will never give you up so. Yet consider, Lydia; you tell me he is but an ensign, and you have thirty thousand pounds!

*Lydia.* But you know I lose most of my fortune if I marry without my aunt's consent, till of age; and that is what I have determined to do, ever since I knew the penalty. Nor could I love the man, who would wish to wait a day for the alternative.

*Julia.* Nay, this is caprice!

*Lydia.* What, does Julia tax me with caprice? I thought her lover Faulkland had inured her to it.

*Julia.* I do not love even his faults.

*Lydia.* But apropos! you have sent to him, I suppose?

*Julia.* Not yet, upon my word! nor has he the least idea of my being in Bath. Sir Anthony's resolution was so sudden, I could not inform him of it.

*Lydia.* Well, Julia, you are your own mistress, (though under the protection of sir Anthony) yet have you, for this long year, been a slave to the caprice, the whim, the jealousy of this ungrateful Faulkland, who will ever delay assuming the

rights of a husband, while you suffer him to be equally imperious as a lover.

*Julia.* Nay, you are wrong entirely. We were contracted before my father's death. That, and some consequent embarrassments, have delayed what I know to be my Faulkland's most ardent wish. He is too generous to trifle on such a point. And, for his character, you wrong him there, too. No, Lydia, he is too proud, too noble to be jealous; if he is captious, 'tis without dissembling; if fretful, without rudeness. Unused to the fopperies of love, he is negligent of the little duties expected from a lover—but being unhackneyed in the passion, his affection is ardent and sincere; and, as it engrosses his whole soul, he expects every thought and emotion of his mistress to move in unison with his. Yet, though his pride calls for this full return, his humility makes him undervalue those qualities in him, which would entitle him to it; and, not feeling why he should be loved to the degree he wishes, he still suspects that he is not loved enough. This temper, I must own, has cost me many unhappy hours; but I have learned to think myself his debtor, for those imperfections which arise from the ardour of his attachment.

*Lydia.* Well, I cannot blame you for defending him. But, tell me candidly, Julia, had he never saved your life, do you think you should have been attached to him as you are? Believe me, the rude blast, that overset your boat, was a prosperous gale of love to him.

*Julia.* Gratitude may have strengthened my attachment to Mr Faulkland, but I loved him before he had preserved me; yet, surely, that alone were an obligation sufficient——

*Lydia.* Obligation! Why, a water-spaniel would have done as much! Well, I should never think of giving my heart to a man, because he could swim!

*Julia.* Come, Lydia, you are too inconsiderate.

*Lydia.* Nay, I do but jest. What's here?

*Enter* LUCY, *in a hurry.*

*Lucy.* O, madam, here is sir Anthony Absolute just come home with your aunt!

*Lydia.* They'll not come here. Lucy, do you watch. [*Exit* LUCY.

*Julia.* Yet I must go. Sir Anthony does not know I am here, and if we meet, he'll detain me, to shew me the town. I'll take another opportunity of paying my respects to Mrs Malaprop, when she shall treat me, as long as she chooses, with her select words so ingeniously misapplied, without being mispronounced.

*Re-enter* LUCY.

*Lucy.* O lud! Ma'am, they are both coming up stairs!

*Lydia.* Well, I'll not detain you, coz. Adieu, my dear Julia; I'm sure you are in haste to send to Faulkland. There—through my room you'll find another stair-case.

*Julia.* Adieu!—[*Embrace.*]

[*Exit* JULIA.

*Lydia.* Here, my dear Lucy, hide these books. Quick, quick! Fling Peregrine Pickle under the toilet—throw Roderick Random into the closet—put the Innocent Adultery into the Whole Duty of Man—thrust Lord Aimworth under the sopha—cram Ovid behind the bolster—there—put the Man of Feeling into your pocket—so, so; now, lay Mrs Chapone in sight, and leave Fordyce's Sermons open on the table.

*Lucy.* O burn it! Madam, the hair-dresser has torn away as far as Proper Pride.

*Lydia.* Never mind—open at Sobriety. Fling me Lord Chesterfield's Letters. Now for them.

*Enter* MRS MALAPROP, *and* SIR ANTHONY ABSOLUTE.

*Mrs Mal.* There, sir Anthony, there sits the deliberate simpleton, who wants to disgrace her family, and lavish herself on a fellow not worth a shilling.

*Lydia.* Madam, I thought you once———

*Mrs Mal.* You thought, miss! I don't know any business you have to think at all. Thought does not become a young woman. But the point we would request of you is, that you will promise to forget this fellow——to illiterate him, I say, quite from your memory.

*Lydia.* Ah, madam! our memories are independent of our wills. It is not easy to forget.

*Mrs Mal.* But I say it is, miss; there is nothing on earth so easy as to forget, if a person chooses to set about it. I'm sure I have as much forgot your poor dear uncle, as if he had never existed—and I thought it my duty so to do; and let me tell you, Lydia, these violent memories don't become a young woman.

*Sir Anth.* Why, sure she won't pretend to remember what she's ordered not! Ay, this comes of her reading!

*Lydia.* What crime, madam, have I committed to be treated thus?

*Mrs Mal.* Now, don't attempt to extirpate yourself from the matter; you know I have proof controvertible of it. But tell me, will you promise to do as you are bid? Will you take a husband of your friends' choosing?

*Lydia.* Madam, I must tell you plainly, that had I no preference for any one else, the choice you have made would be my aversion.

*Mrs Mal.* What business have you, miss, with preference and aversion? They don't become a young woman; and you ought to know, that, as both always wear off, 'tis safest in matrimony to begin with a little aversion. I'm sure I hated your poor dear uncle before marriage as if he'd been a black-a-moor—and yet, miss, you are sensible what a wife I made! and when it pleased Heaven to release me from him, 'tis unknown

what tears I shed! But suppose we were going to give you another choice, will you promise us to give up this Beverley?

*Lydia.* Could I belie my thoughts so far as to give that promise, my actions would certainly as far belie my words.

*Mrs Mal.* Take yourself to your room. You are fit company for nothing but your own ill humours.

*Lydia.* Willingly, madam---I cannot change for the worse.

[*Exit* LYDIA.

*Mrs Mal.* There's a little intricate hussy for you!

*Sir Anth.* It is not to be wondered at, madam; all this is the natural consequence of teaching girls to read. Had I a thousand daughters, by Heaven, I'd as soon have them taught the black art as their alphabet!

*Mrs Mal.* Nay, nay; sir Anthony, you are an absolute misanthropy.

*Sir Anth.* In my way hither, Mrs Malaprop, I observed your niece's maid coming forth from a circulating library; she had a book in each hand; they were half-bound volumes, with marble covers; from that moment I guessed how full of duty I should see her mistress.

*Mrs Mal.* Those are vile places, indeed!

*Sir Anth.* Madam, a circulating library in a town, is as an ever-green tree of diabolical knowledge; it blossoms through the year: and, depend on it, Mrs Malaprop, that they, who are so fond of handling the leaves, will long for the fruit at last.

*Mrs Mal.* Fie, fie; sir Anthony, you surely speak laconically.

*Sir Anth.* Why, Mrs Malaprop, in moderation, now, what would you have a woman know?

*Mrs Mal.* Observe me, sir Anthony. I would by no means wish a daughter of mine to be a progeny of learning; I don't think so much learning becomes a young woman; for instance---I would never let her meddle with Greek, or Hebrew, or algebra, or simony, or fluxions, or paradoxes, or such inflammatory branches of learning; neither would it be necessary for her to handle any of your mathematical, astronomical, diabolical instruments: but, sir Anthony, I would send her, at nine years old, to a boarding-school, in order to learn a little ingenuity and artifice. Then, sir, she should have a supercilious knowledge in accounts; and, as she grew up, I would have her instructed in geometry, that she might know something of the contagious countries; but above all, sir Anthony, she should be mistress of orthodoxy, that she might not mis-spell, and mispronounce words so shamefully as girls usually do; and likewise that she might reprehend the true meaning of what she is saying. This, sir Anthony, is what I would have a woman know; and I don't think there is a superstitious article in it.

*Sir Anth.* Well, well, Mrs Malaprop, I will dispute the point no further with you; though, I must confess, that you are a truly moderate and polite arguer, for almost every third word you say is on my side of the question. But, Mrs Malaprop, to the more important point in debate---you say you have no objection to my proposal?

*Mrs Mal.* None, I assure you. I am under no positive engagement with Mr Acres; and as Lydia is so obstinate against him, perhaps your son may have better success.

*Sir Anth.* Well, madam, I will write for the boy directly. He knows not a syllable of this yet, though I have for some time had the proposal in my head. He is at present with his regiment.

*Mrs Mal.* We have never seen your son, sir Anthony; but I hope no objection on his side?

*Sir Anth.* Objection! Let him object if he dare! No, no, Mrs Malaprop, Jack knows that the least demur puts me in a phrenzy directly. My process was always very simple; in their younger days, 'twas 'Jack do this;' if he demurred, I knocked him down; and if he grumbled at that, I always sent him out of the room.

*Mrs Mal.* Ay; and the properest way, o' my conscience! Nothing is so conciliating to young people as severity. Well, sir Anthony, I shall give Mr Acres his discharge, and prepare Lydia to receive your son's invocations; and I hope you will represent her to the captain as an object not altogether illegible.

*Sir Anth.* Madam, I will handle the subject prudently. Well, I must leave you; and let me beg you, Mrs Malaprop, to enforce this matter roundly to the girl; take my advice, keep a tight hand; if she rejects this proposal, clap her under lock and key; and if you were just to let the servants forget to bring her dinner for three or four days, you can't conceive how she'd come about.

[*Exit* SIR ANTH.

*Mrs Mal.* Well; at any rate I shall be glad to get her from under my intuition. She has somehow discovered my partiality for sir Lucius O'-Trigger---sure, Lucy can't have betrayed me! No; the girl is such a simpleton, I should have made her confess it. Lucy! Lucy!---[*Calls.*]---Had she been one of your artificial ones, I should never have trusted her.

*Enter* LUCY.

*Lucy.* Did you call, madam?

*Mrs Mal.* Yes, girl. Did you see sir Lucius while you was out?

*Lucy.* No, indeed, madam, not a glimpse of him.

*Mrs Mal.* You are sure, Lucy, that you never mentioned———

*Lucy.* O gemini! I'd sooner cut my tongue out.

*Mrs Mal.* Well; don't let your simplicity be mposed on.

*Lucy.* No, madam.

*Mrs Mal.* So, come to me presently, and I'll give you another letter to sir Lucius; but mind, Lucy, if ever you betray what you are intrusted with (unless it be other people's secrets to me) you forfeit my malevolence for ever; and your being a simpleton shall be no excuse for your locality. [*Exit* MRS MAL.

*Lucy.* Ha, ha, ha! So, my dear simplicity, let me give you a little respite—[*Altering her manner.*]—let girls in my station be as fond as they please of appearing expert, and knowing in their trusts; commend me to a mask of silliness, and a pair of sharp eyes for my own interest under it! Let me see! to what account have I turned my simplicity lately—[*Looks at a paper.*]—For abetting Miss Lydia Languish in a design of running away with an ensign! In money, sundry times, twelve pound twelve—gowns, five—hats, ruffles, caps, &c.—numberless! From the said ensign, within this last month, six guineas and a half—About a quarter's pay! *Item.* From Mrs Malaprop, for betraying the young people to her—when I found matters were likely to be discovered—two guineas, and a black padusoy. *Item.* From Mr Acres, for carrying divers letters—which I never delivered—two guineas, and a pair of buckles. *Item,* From sir Lucius O'Trigger, three crowns, two gold pocket-pieces, and a silver snuff-box! Well done, simplicity! Yet I was forced to make my Hibernian believe, that he was corresponding, not with the aunt, but with the niece: for, though not over-rich, I found he had too much pride and delicacy to sacrifice the feelings of a gentleman to the necessities of his fortune. [*Exit.*

## ACT II.

### SCENE I.—CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE'S *Lodgings.*

*Enter* CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE *and* FAG.

*Fag.* SIR, while I was there, sir Anthony came in: I told him, you had sent me to inquire after his health, and to know if he was at leisure to see you.

*Abs.* And what did he say, on hearing I was at Bath?

*Fag.* Sir, in my life I never saw an elderly gentleman more astonished; he started back two or three paces, rapt out a dozen interjectural oaths, and asked, what the devil had brought you here?

*Abs.* Well, sir, and what did you say?

*Fag.* O, I lied, sir; I forget the precise lie: but you may depend on't, he got no truth from me. Yet, with submission, for fear of blunders in future, I should be glad to fix what has brought us to Bath: in order that we may lie a little consistently. Sir Anthony's servants were curious, sir; very curious indeed.

*Abs.* You have said nothing to them?——

*Fag.* O, not a word, sir; not a word. Mr Thomas, indeed, the coachman (whom I take to be the discreetest of whips)——

*Abs.* 'Sdeath! You rascal! You have not trusted him?

*Fag.* O, no, sir; no, no; not a syllable, upon my veracity! He was, indeed, a little inquisitive; but I was sly, sir, devilish sly!—My master (said I), honest Thomas, (you know, sir, one says honest to one's inferiors) is come to Bath to recruit—Yes, sir, I said, to recruit; and whether for men, money, or constitution, you know, sir, is nothing to him, nor any one else.

*Abs.* Well, recruit will do; let it be so—

*Fag.* O, sir, recruit will do surprisingly—indeed, to give the thing an air, I told Thomas, that your honour had already inlisted five disbanded chairmen, seven minority waiters, and thirteen billiard markers.

*Abs.* You blockhead, never say more than is necessary!

*Fag.* I beg pardon, sir, I beg pardon; but, with submission, a lie is nothing unless one supports it. Sir, whenever I draw on my invention for a good current lie, I always forge indorsements as well as the bill.

*Abs.* Well, take care you don't hurt your credit, by offering too much security.—Is Mr Faulkland returned?

*Fag.* He is above, sir, changing his dress.

*Abs.* Can you tell whether he has been informed of sir Anthony's and Miss Melville's arrival?

*Fag.* I fancy not, sir; he has seen no one since he came in, but his gentleman, who was with him at Bristol. I think, sir, I hear Mr Faulkland coming down.

*Abs.* Go, tell him, I am here.

*Fag.* Yes, sir. [*Going.*] I beg pardon, sir; but should sir Anthony call, you will do me the favour to remember, that we are recruiting, if you please?

*Abs.* Well, well.

*Fag.* And, in tenderness to my character, if your honour could bring in the chairmen and waiters, I should esteem it as an obligation; for, though I never scruple a lie to serve my master, yet it hurts one's conscience to be found out. [*Exit.*

*Abs.* Now for my whimsical friend—if he does not know that his mistress is here, I'll teaze him a little before I tell him———

*Enter* FAULKLAND.

Faulkland, you're welcome to Bath again! you are punctual in your return.

*Faulk.* Yes; I had nothing to detain me, when I had finished the business I went on. Well, what news since I left you? How stand matters between you and Lydia?

*Abs.* Faith, much as they were; I have not seen her since our quarrel; however, I expect to be recalled every hour.

*Faulk.* Why don't you persuade her to go off with you at once?

*Abs.* What, and lose two-thirds of her fortune? You forget that, my friend. No, no, I could have brought her to that long ago.

*Faulk.* Nay, then, you trifle too long—if you are sure of her, propose to the aunt in your own character, and write to sir Anthony for his consent.

*Abs.* Softly, softly; for though I am convinced my little Lydia would elope with me as ensign Beverley, yet am I by no means certain that she would take me with the impediment of our friends' consent, a regular humdrum wedding, and the reversion of a good fortune on my side: No, no; I must prepare her gradually for the discovery, and make myself necessary to her, before I risk it. Well, but Faulkland, you'll dine with us to-day at the hotel?

*Faulk.* Indeed, I cannot; I am not in spirits to be of such a party.

*Abs.* By heavens! I shall forswear your company. You are the most teasing, captious, incorrigible lover! Do love like a man.

*Faulk.* I own I am unfit for company.

*Abs.* Am not I a lover, ay, and a romantic one too? Yet, do I carry every where with me such a confounded farrago of doubts, fears, hopes, wishes, and all the flimsy furniture of a country miss's brain?

*Faulk.* Ah, Jack! your heart and soul are not, like mine, fixed immutably on one only object. You throw for a large stake, but losing—you could stake, and throw again: but I have set my sum of happiness on this cast, and not to succeed, were to be stript of all.

*Abs.* But, for Heaven's sake! what grounds for apprehension can your whimsical brain conjure up at present?

*Faulk.* What grounds for apprehension did you say? Heavens! are there not a thousand? I fear for her spirits, her health, her life—My absence may fret her; her anxiety for my return, her fears for me, may oppress her gentle temper. And for her health—does not every hour bring me cause to be alarmed? If it rains, some shower may even then have chilled her delicate frame! If the wind be keen, some rude blast may have affected her! The heat of noon, the dews of the evening, may endanger the life of her, for whom only I value mine. O, Jack! when delicate and feeling souls are separated, there is not a feature in the sky, not a movement of the elements, not an aspiration of the breeze, but hints some cause for a lover's apprehension!

*Abs.* Ay, but we may chuse whether we will take the hint or not. So then, Faulkland, if you were convinced that Julia were well and in spirits, you would be entirely content?

*Faulk.* I should be happy beyond measure—I am anxious only for that.

*Abs.* Then, to cure your anxiety at once—Miss Melville is in perfect health, and is at this moment in Bath.

*Faulk.* Nay, Jack—don't trifle with me.

*Abs.* She is arrived here, with my father, within this hour.

*Faulk.* Can you be serious?

*Abs.* I thought you knew sir Anthony better than to be surprised at a sudden whim of this kind. Seriously, then, it is as I tell you—upon my honour.

*Faulk.* My dear friend!—Hollo, Du Peigne! my hat—my dear Jack—now, nothing on earth can give me a moment's uneasiness.

*Enter* FAG.

*Fag.* Sir, Mr Acres, just arrived, is below.

*Abs.* Stay, Faulkland, this Acres lives within a mile of sir Anthony, and he shall tell you how your mistress has been ever since you left her.—Fag, shew the gentleman up. [*Exit* FAG.

*Faulk.* What, is he much acquainted in the family?

*Abs.* O, very intimate: I insist on your not going: besides, his character will divert you.

*Faulk.* Well, I should like to ask him a few questions.

*Abs.* He is likewise a rival of mine—that is of my other self's, for he does not think his friend captain Absolute ever saw the lady in question; and it is ridiculous enough to hear him complain to me of one Beverley, a concealed, sculking rival, who——

*Faulk.* Hush! he's here.

*Enter* ACRES.

*Acres.* Hah! my dear friend, noble captain, and honest Jack, how dost thou? just arrived, faith, as you see. Sir, your humble servant. Warm work on the roads, Jack—Odds whips and wheels! I've travelled like a comet, with a tail of dust all the way as long as the Mall.

*Abs.* Ah! Bob, you are indeed an eccentric planet; but we know your attraction hither—— Give me leave to introduce Mr Faulkland to you. Mr Faulkland, Mr Acres.

*Acres.* Sir, I am most heartily glad to see you: Sir, I solicit your connexions.—Hey, Jack, what, this is Mr Faulkland, who———

*Abs.* Ay, Bob, Miss Melville's Mr Faulkland.

*Acres.* Odso! she and your father can be but just arrived before me—I suppose you have seen them. Ah! Mr Faulkland, you are indeed a happy man.

*Faulk.* I have not seen Miss Melville yet, sir; I hope she enjoyed full health and spirits in Devonshire?

*Acres.* Never knew her better in my life, sir; never better. Odds blushes and blooms! she has been as healthy as the German Spa.

*Faulk.* Indeed! I did hear that she had been a little indisposed.

*Acres.* False, false, sir; only said to vex you: quite the reverse, I assure you.

*Faulk.* There, Jack, you see she has the advantage of me; I had almost fretted myself ill.

*Abs.* Now are you angry with your mistress for not having been sick!

*Faulk.* No, no; you misunderstand me: yet surely, a little trifling indisposition is not an unnatural consequence of absence from those we love. Now, confess, isn't there something unkind in this violent, robust, unfeeling health?

*Abs.* O, it was very unkind of her to be well in your absence, to be sure!

*Acres.* Good apartments, Jack.

*Faulk.* Well, sir, but you was saying, that Miss Melville has been so exceedingly well—what, then, she has been merry and gay, I suppose?—Always in spirits, hey?

*Acres.* Merry! odds crickets, she has been the bell and spirit of the company wherever she has been—so lively and entertaining! so full of wit and humour!

*Faulk.* There, Jack, there! O, by my soul, there is an innate levity in woman, that nothing can overcome! What! happy and I away?

*Abs.* Have done: How foolish this is! just now, you were only apprehensive for your mistress's spirits.

*Faulk.* Why, Jack, have I been the joy and spirit of the company?

*Abs.* No, indeed, you have not.

*Faulk.* Have I been lively and entertaining?

*Abs.* O, upon my word, I acquit you.

*Faulk.* Have I been full of wit and humour?

*Abs.* No, faith; to do you justice, you have been confoundedly stupid indeed.

*Acres.* What's the matter with the gentleman?

*Abs.* He is only expressing his great satisfaction at hearing that Julia has been so well and happy, that's all—hey, Faulkland?

*Faulk.* Oh! I am rejoiced to hear it—yes, yes, she has a happy disposition!

*Acres.* That she has indeed—then she is so accomplished, so sweet a voice, so expert at her harpsichord, such a mistress of flat and sharp—squallante, rumblante, and quiverante!—there was this time month, odds minnums and crotchets! how she did chirup at Mrs Piano's concert!

*Faulk.* There again, what say you to this? you see she has been all mirth and song—not a thought of me!

*Abs.* Pho! man, is not music the food of love?

*Faulk.* Well, well, it may be so.—Pray, Mr —— what's his damned name?—Do you remember what songs Miss Melville sung?

*Acres.* Not I indeed.

*Abs.* Stay now, they were some pretty melancholy purling-stream airs, I warrant; perhaps you may recollect; did she sing—'When absent from 'my soul's delight?'

*Acres.* No, that wa'n't it.

*Abs.* Or—'Go, gentle gales!'—'Go, gentle 'gales!' [*Sings.*

*Acres.* O no! nothing like it. Odds! now I recollect one of them—'My heart's my own, my 'will is free.' [*Sings.*

*Faulk.* Fool! fool that I am! to fix all my happiness on such a trifler! 'Sdeath! to make herself the pipe and ballad-monger of a circle! to sooth her light heart with catches and glees! What can you say to this, sir?

*Abs.* Why, that I should be glad to hear my mistress had been so merry, sir.

*Faulk.* Nay, nay, nay; I'm not sorry that she has been happy—no, no; I am glad of that—I would not have had her sad or sick—yet, surely, a sympathetic heart would have shewn itself even in the choice of a song—she might have been temperately healthy, and somehow, plaintively gay—but she has been dancing too, I doubt not!

*Acres.* What does the gentleman say about dancing?

*Abs.* He says the lady we speak of dances as well as she sings.

*Acres.* Aye, truly, does she—there was at our last race-ball———

*Faulk.* Hell and the devil! There! there—I told you so! I told you so! Oh! she thrives in my absence!—Dancing! but her whole feelings have been in opposition with mine. I have been anxious, silent, pensive, sedentary—my days have been hours of care, my nights of watchfulness. She has been all health! spirit! laugh! song! dance!—Oh! damned, damned levity!

*Abs.* For Heaven's sake, Faulkland, don't expose yourself so! Suppose she has danced, what then? does not the ceremony of society often oblige———

*Faulk.* Well, well, I'll contain myself—perhaps, as you say, for form sake. What, Mr Acres, you were praising Miss Melville's manner of dancing a minuet, hey?

*Acres.* O, I dare ensure her for that—but what I was going to speak of was her country dancing: Odds swimmings! she has such an air with her!

*Faulk.* Now disappointment on her!—defend this, Absolute! why don't you defend this?—Country-dances! jigs and reels! am I to blame now? A minuet I could have forgiven—I should not have minded that—I say I should not have

regarded a minuet; but country-dances!—Zounds! had she made one in a cotillion, I believe I could have forgiven that; but to be monkey-led for a night! to run the gauntlet through a string of amorous palming puppies! to shew paces like a managed filly!—O Jack, there never can be but one man in the world, whom a truly modest and delicate woman ought to pair with in a country-dance; and even then, the rest of the couples should be her great uncles and aunts!

*Abs.* Ay, to be sure! grandfathers and grandmothers!

*Faulk.* If there be but one vicious mind in the set, 'twill spread like a contagion; the action of their pulse beats to the lascivious movement of the jig; their quivering, warm-breathed sighs, impregnate the very air; the atmosphere becomes electrical to love; and each amorous spark darts through every link of the chain!—I must leave you—I own I am somewhat flurried; and that confounded looby has perceived it. [*Going.*

*Abs.* Nay, but stay, Faukland, and thank Mr Acres for his good news!

*Faulk.* Damn his news! [*Exit* FAULK.

*Abs.* Ha, ha, ha! poor Faulkland! Five minutes since, nothing on earth could give him a moment's uneasiness!

*Acres.* The gentleman was not angry at my praising his mistress! was he?

*Abs.* A little jealous, I believe, Bob.

*Acres.* You don't say so? Ha, ha! jealous of me! that's a good joke!

*Abs.* There's nothing strange in that, Bob; let me tell you, that sprightly grace, and insinuating manner of yours, will do some mischief among the girls here!

*Acres.* Ah, you joke! ha, ha, mischief! ha, ha! but, you know, I am not my own property; my dear Lydia has forestalled me! She could never abide me in the country, because I used to dress so badly; but odds frogs and tambours, I shan't take matters so here—now, ancient madam has no voice in it—I'll make my old clothes know who's master—I shall straightway cashier the hunting-frock, and render my leather breeches incapable—My hair has been in training some time.

*Abs.* Indeed!

*Acres.* Aye; and tho'ff the side curls are a little restive, my hind-part takes it very kindly.

*Abs.* O, you'll polish, I doubt not.

*Acres.* Absolutely I propose so—then, if I can find out this ensign Beverley, odds triggers and flints! I'll make him know the difference o't.

*Abs.* Spoke like a man!—but pray, Bob, I observe you have got an odd kind of a new method of swearing——

*Acres.* Ha, ha! you've taken notice of it—'tis genteel, is not it?—I did not invent it myself though; but a commander in our militia, a great scholar, I assure you, says that there is no meaning in the common oaths; and that nothing but their antiquity makes them respectable; because, he says, the ancients would never stick to an oath or two, but would say, by Jove! or by Bacchus! or by Mars! or by Venus! or by Pallas! according to the sentiment; so that, to swear with propriety, says my little major, the oath should be an echo to the sense; and this we call the oath referential, or sentimental swearing, ha, ha, ha! 'tis genteel, is not it?

*Abs.* Very genteel, and very new, indeed; and, I dare say, will supplant all other figures of imprecation.

*Acres.* Ay, ay, the best terms will grow obsolete—Damns have had their day.

*Enter* FAG.

*Fag.* Sir, there is a gentlemen below desires to see you—Shall I shew him into the parlour?

*Abs.* Ay; you may.

*Acres.* Well, I must be gone——

*Abs.* Stay; who is it, Fag?

*Fag.* Your father, sir.

*Abs.* You puppy, why did not you shew him up directly? [*Exit* FAG.

*Acres.* You have business with sir Anthony. I expect a message from Mrs Malaprop at my lodgings. I have sent also to my dear friend sir Lucius O'Trigger. Adieu, Jack; we must meet at night, when you shall give me a dozen bumpers to little Lydia.

*Abs.* That I will with all my heart. [*Exit* ACRES.] Now for a parental lecture. I hope he has heard nothing of the business that has brought me here. I wish the gout had held him fast in Devonshire, with all my soul!

*Enter* SIR ANTHONY.

Sir, I am delighted to see you here; and looking so well! your sudden arrival at Bath made me apprehensive for your health.

*Sir Anth.* Very apprehensive, I dare say, Jack. What! you are recruiting here, hey?

*Abs.* Yes, sir; I am on duty.

*Sir Anth.* Well, Jack, I am glad to see you, though I did not expect it; for I was going to write to you on a little matter of business. Jack, I have been considering that I grow old and infirm, and shall probably not trouble you long.

*Abs.* Pardon me, sir! I never saw you look more strong and hearty; and I pray fervently that you may continue so.

*Sir Anth.* I hope your prayers may be heard, with all my heart. Well, then, Jack, I have been considering that I am so strong and hearty, I may continue to plague you a long time. Now, Jack, I am sensible that the income of your commission, and what I have hitherto allowed you, is but a small pittance for a lad of your spirit.

*Abs.* Sir, you are very good.

*Sir Anth* And it is my wish, while yet I live, to have my boy make some figure in the world.

I have resolved, therefore, to fix you at once in a noble independence.

*Abs.* Sir, your kindness overpowers me—such generosity makes the gratitude of reason more lively than the sensations even of filial affection.

*Sir Anth.* I am glad you are so sensible of my attention; and you shall be master of a large estate in a few weeks.

*Abs.* Let my future life, sir, speak my gratitude; I cannot express the sense I have of your munificence. Yet, sir, I presume you would not wish me to quit the army?

*Sir Anth.* O, that shall be as your wife chooses.

*Abs.* My wife, sir!

*Sir Anth.* Ay, ay; settle that between you; settle that between you.

*Abs.* A wife, sir! did you say?

*Sir Anth.* Ay, a wife; why, did not I mention her before?

*Abs.* Not a word of her, sir.

*Sir Anth.* Odd so!—I must not forget her though. Yes, Jack, the independence I was talking of, is by a marriage; the fortune is saddled with a wife; but, I suppose, that makes no difference?

*Abs.* Sir, sir!—you amaze me!

*Sir Anth.* Why, what the devil's the matter with the fool? Just now, you were all gratitude and duty.

*Abs.* I was, sir—you talked to me of independence and a fortune, but not a word of a wife!

*Sir Anth.* Why, what difference does that make? Odds life, sir! if you have the estate, you must take it with the live stock on it, as it stands.

*Abs.* If my happiness is to be the price, I must beg leave to decline the purchase.——Pray, sir, who is the lady?

*Sir Anth.* What's that to you, sir?—Come, give me your promise to love, and to marry her directly.

*Abs.* Sure, sir, this is not very reasonable, to summon my affections for a lady I know nothing of!

*Sir Anth.* I am sure, sir, 'tis more unreasonable in you to object to a lady you know nothing of.

*Abs.* Then, sir, I must tell you plainly, that my inclinations are fixed on another—my heart is engaged to an angel!

*Sir Anth.* Then, pray, let it send an excuse. It is very sorry—but business prevents its waiting on her.

*Abs.* But my vows are pledged to her.

*Sir Anth.* Let her foreclose, Jack; let her foreclose; they are not worth redeeming; besides, you have the angel's vows in exchange, I suppose; so there can be no loss there.

*Abs.* You must excuse me, sir, if I tell you, once for all, that in this point I cannot obey you.

*Sir Anth.* Hark'e, Jack;—I have heard you for some time with patience—I have been cool—quite cool; but take care—you know I am complaisance itself—when I am not thwarted;—no one more easily led, when I have my own way;—but don't put me in a phrenzy.

*Abs.* Sir, I must repeat it—in this, I cannot obey you.

*Sir Anth.* Now, damn me if ever I call you Jack again while I live!

*Abs.* Nay, sir, but hear me.

*Sir Anth.* Sir, I won't hear a word—not a word—not one word! so give me your promise by a nod—and I'll tell you what, Jack—I mean, you dog—if you don't, by———

*Abs.* What, sir, promise to link myself to some mass of ugliness? to———

*Sir Anth.* Zounds, sirrah! the lady shall be as ugly as I choose: she shall have a hump on each shoulder; she shall be as crooked as the crescent; her one eye shall roll like the bull's in Cox's museum; she shall have a skin like a mummy; and the beard of a Jew:—she shall be all this, sirrah!—yet, I will make you ogle her all day, and sit up all night to write sonnets on her beauty.

*Abs.* This is reason and moderation, indeed!

*Sir Anth.* None of your sneering, puppy! no grinning, jackanapes!

*Abs.* Indeed, sir, I never was in a worse humour for mirth in my life.

*Sir Anth.* 'Tis false, sir; I know you are laughing in your sleeve; I know you'll grin when I am gone, sirrah!

*Abs.* Sir, I hope I know my duty better.

*Sir Anth.* None of your passion, sir; none of your violence, if you please—It won't do with me, I promise you.

*Abs.* Indeed, sir, I never was cooler in my life.

*Sir Anth.* 'Tis a confounded lie!—I know you are in a passion in your heart; I know you are, you hypocritical young dog! but it won't do.

*Abs.* Nay, sir, upon my word!

*Sir Anth.* So you will fly out? can't you be cool, like me? What the devil good can passion do?—Passion is of no service; you impudent, insolent, overbearing reprobate! There, you sneer again!—don't provoke me!—but you rely upon the mildness of my temper—you do, you dog! you play upon the meekness of my disposition! Yet, take care—the patience of a saint may be overcome at last!—but mark! I give you six hours and a half to consider of this: if you then agree, without any condition, to do every thing on earth that I choose, why—confound you! I may in time forgive you—If not, zounds, don't enter the same hemisphere with me! don't dare to breathe the same air, or use the same light with me; but get an atmosphere and a sun of your own! I'll strip you of your commission; I'll lodge a five-and-threepence in the hands of trustees, and you shall live on the interest.—I'll dis-

own you, I'll disinherit you, I'll unget you! and damn me, if ever I call you Jack again!

[*Exit* SIR ANTH.

*Abs.* Mild, gentle, considerate father, I kiss your hands. What a tender method of giving his opinion in these matters sir Anthony has! I dare not trust him with the truth. I wonder what old, wealthy hag it is that he wants to bestow on me! —yet, he married, himself, for love! and was, in his youth, a bold intriguer, and a gay companion!

*Enter* FAG.

*Fag.* Assuredly, sir, your father is wrath to a degree: he comes down stairs eight or ten steps at a time, muttering, growling, and thumping the banisters all the way: I, and the cook's dog, stand bowing at the door—rap! he gives me a stroke on the head with his cane, bids me carry that to my master; then, kicking the poor turnspit into the area, damns us all, for a puppy triumvirate!—Upon my credit, sir, were I in your place, and found my father such very bad company, I should certainly drop his acquaintance.

*Abs.* Cease your impertinence, sir, at present. —Did you come in for nothing more?—Stand out of the way. [*Pushes him aside, and exit.*

*Fag.* So! Sir Anthony trims my master: He is afraid to reply to his father, then vents his spleen on poor Fag!—When one is vexed by one person, to revenge one's self on another, who happens to come in the way—is the vilest injustice! Ah! it shews the worst temper—the basest——

*Enter Errand Boy.*

*Boy.* Mr Fag! Mr Fag! your master calls you.

*Fag.* Well, you little dirty puppy, you need not bawl so!—The meanest disposition! the—

*Boy.* Quick, quick, Mr Fag.

*Fag.* Quick, quick, you impudent jackanapes! am I to be commanded by you, too! you little impertinent, insolent, kitchen-bred——

[*Exit, kicking and beating him.*

SCENE II.—*The North Parade.*

*Enter* LUCY.

*Lucy.* So—I shall have another rival to add to my mistress's list—captain Absolute.——However, I shall not enter his name till my purse has received notice in form. Poor Acres is dismissed!—Well, I have done him a last friendly office, in letting him know that Beverley was here before him. Sir Lucius is generally more punctual, when he expects to hear from his *dear Dalia,* as he calls her: I wonder he's not here! —I have a little scruple of conscience from this deceit; though I should not be paid so well, if my hero knew that Delia was near fifty, and her own mistress.

*Enter* SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.

*Sir Luc.* Hah! my little embassadress—Upon my conscience, I have been looking for you; I have been on the south parade this half hour.

*Lucy.* [*Speaking simply.*] O gemini! and I have been waiting for your worship here on the north!

*Sir Luc.* Faith!—may be, that was the reason we did not meet; and it is very comical too, how you could go out, and I not see you—for I was only taking a nap at the parade coffee-house, and I chose the window on purpose that I might not miss you.

*Lucy.* My stars! Now, I would wager a sixpence I went by while you were asleep!

*Sir Luc.* Sure enough it must have been so—and I never dreamt it was so late till I waked. Well, but my little girl, have you got nothing for me?

*Lucy.* Yes, but I have——I've got a letter for you in my pocket.

*Sir Luc.* O, faith, I guessed you were not come empty-handed! Well; let me see what the dear creature says.

*Lucy.* There, sir Lucius.

[*Gives him a letter.*

*Sir Luc.* [*Reads.*] 'Sir—There is often a sud-'den incentive impulse in love, that has a great-'er induction than years of domestic combina-'tion: such was the commotion I felt at the first 'superfluous view of sir Lucius O'Trigger.' Very pretty, upon my word. 'Female punctuation 'forbids me to say more; yet, let me add, that 'it will give me joy infallible to find sir Lucius 'worthy the last criterion of my affections.

'DELIA.'

Upon my conscience, Lucy, your lady is a great mistress of language! Faith, she's quite the queen of the dictionary! for the devil a word dare refuse coming at her call——though one would think it was quite out of hearing.

*Lucy.* Ay, sir, a lady of her experience.

*Sir Luc.* Experience! what, at seventeen!

*Lucy.* O, true, sir—but then she reads so—my stars! how she will read off hand!

*Sir Luc.* Faith, she must be very deep read to write this way, though she is rather an arbitrary writer, too; for here are a great many poor words pressed into the service of this note, that would get their habeas corpus from any court in Christendom.

*Lucy.* Ah, sir Lucius! If you were to hear how she talks of you!

*Sir Luc.* O, tell her, I'll make her the best husband in the world, and lady O'Trigger into the bargain! But we must get the old gentlewoman's consent, and do every thing fairly.

*Lucy.* Nay, sir Lucius; I thought you was not rich enough to be so nice!

*Sir Luc.* Upon my word, young woman, you

have hit it: I am so poor, that I can't afford to do a dirty action. If I did not want money, I would steal your mistress and her fortune with a great deal of pleasure. However, my pretty girl, [*Gives her money.*] here's a little something to buy you a ribband; and meet me in the evening, and I'll give you an answer to this. So, hussy, take a kiss beforehand, to put you in mind.

[*Kisses her.*

*Lucy.* O, lud, sir Lucius! I never seed such a gemman! My lady won't like you if you are so impudent.

*Sir Luc.* Faith she will, Lucy; that same—pho! what's the name of it?—modesty—is a quality in a lover more praised by the women than liked; so, if your mistress asks you whether sir Lucius ever gave you a kiss, tell her fifty, my dear.

*Lucy.* What, would you have me tell her a lie?

*Sir Luc.* Ah, then, you baggage? I'll make it a truth presently.

*Lucy.* For shame, now! here is some one coming.

*Sir Luc.* O, faith, I'll quiet your consience!

[*Sees* FAG. *Exit, humming a tune.*

*Enter* FAG.

*Fag.* So, so, madam! I humbly beg pardon.

*Lucy.* O, lud! now, Mr Fag—you flurry one so.

*Fag.* Come, come, Lucy; here's no one by—so a little less simplicity, with a grain or two more sincerity, if you please. You play false with us, madam. I saw you give the baronet a letter. My master shall know this; and if he don't call him out, I will.

*Lucy.* Ha, ha, ha! you gentlemen's gentlemen are so hasty. That letter was from Mrs Malaprop, simpleton. She is taken with sir Lucius's address.

*Fag.* How! what tastes some people have! Why, I suppose I have walked by her window an hundred times. But what says your young lady? Any message to my master?

*Lucy.* Sad news, Mr Fag! A worse rival than Acres! Sir Anthony Absolute has proposed his son.

*Fag.* What! captain Absolute?

*Lucy.* Even so—I overheard it all.

*Fag.* Ha, ha, ha! very good, faith! Good-bye, Lucy; I must away with this news.

*Lucy.* Well; you may laugh; but it is true, I assure you. [*Going.*] But, Mr Fag, tell your master not to be cast down by this.

*Fag.* O, he'll be so disconsolate!

*Lucy.* And charge him not to think of quarrelling with young Absolute.

*Fag.* Never fear! never fear!——

*Lucy.* Be sure; bid him keep up his spirits.

*Fag.* We will———we will.

[*Exeunt severally.*

## ACT III.

### SCENE I.—*The North Parade.*

*Enter* ABSOLUTE.

*Abs.* 'Tis just as Fag told me, indeed. Whimsical enough, faith! My father wants to force me to marry the very girl I am plotting to run away with. He must not know of my connection with her yet a-while. He has too summary a method of proceeding in these matters. However, I'll read my recantation instantly. My conversion is something sudden, indeed; but I can assure him it is very sincere. So, so, here he comes. He looks plaguy gruff.

[*Steps aside.*

*Enter* SIR ANTHONY.

*Sir Anth.* No: I'll die sooner than forgive him! Die, did I say? I'll live these fifty years to plague him. At our last meeting, his impudence had almost put me out of temper. An obstinate, passionate, self-willed boy! Who can he take after? This is my return for getting him before all his brothers and sisters! for putting him, at twelve years old, into a marching regiment, and allowing him fifty pounds a-year, besides his pay, ever since! But I have done with him; he's any body's son for me. I never will see him more; never, never, never, never!

*Abs.* Now for a penitential face.

*Sir Anth.* Fellow, get out of my way!

*Abs.* Sir, you see a penitent before you.

*Sir Anth.* I see an impudent scoundrel before me.

*Abs.* A sincere penitent. I come, sir, to acknowledge my error, and to submit entirely to your will.

*Sir Anth.* What's that?

*Abs.* I have been revolving, and reflecting, and considering on your past goodness, and kindness, and condescension to me.

*Sir Anth.* Well, sir?

*Abs.* I have been likewise weighing and balancing what you were pleased to mention concerning duty, and obedience, and authority.

*Sir Anth.* Well, puppy?

*Abs.* Why, then, sir, the result of my reflections is, a resolution to sacrifice every inclination of my own to your satisfaction.

*Sir Anth.* Why now, you talk sense—absolute sense. I never heard any thing more sensible in my life. Confound you! you shall be Jack again!

*Abs.* I am happy in the appellation.

*Sir Anth.* Why, then, Jack, my dear Jack, I will now inform you who the lady really is.——Nothing but your passion and violence, you silly fellow, prevented my telling you at first. Prepare, Jack, for wonder and rapture—prepare! What think you of Miss Lydia Languish?

*Abs.* Languish! What, the Languishes of Worcestershire?

*Sir Anth.* Worcestershire! No. Did you never meet Mrs Malaprop and her niece, Miss Languish, who came into our country just before you were last ordered to your regiment?

*Abs.* Malaprop! Languish! I don't remember ever to have heard the names before. Yet, stay; I think I do recollect something. Languish! Languish! She squints, don't she? A little red-haired girl?

*Sir Anth.* Squints! A red-haired girl!——Zounds! no.

*Abs.* Then, I must have forgot; it can't be the same person.

*Sir Anth.* Jack! Jack! what think you of blooming, love-breathing seventeen?

*Abs.* As to that, sir, I am quite indifferent. If I can please you in the matter, 'tis all I desire.

*Sir Anth.* Nay, but, Jack, such eyes! such eyes! so innocently wild! so bashfully irresolute! not a glance but speaks and kindles some thought of love! Then, Jack, her cheeks! her cheeks, Jack! so deeply blushing at the insinuations of her tell-tale eyes! Then, Jack, her lips! O, Jack, lips smiling at their own discretion; and, if not smiling, more sweetly pouting; more lovely in sullenness!

*Abs.* That's she, indeed. Well done, old gentleman! [*Aside.*

*Sir Anth.* Then, Jack, her neck! O, Jack, Jack!

*Abs.* And which is to be mine, sir; the niece or the aunt?

*Sir Anth.* Why, you unfeeling, insensible puppy, I despise you! When I was of your age, such a description would have made me fly like a rocket! The aunt, indeed! Odds life! when I ran away with your mother, I would not have touched any thing old or ugly to gain an empire.

*Abs.* Not to please your father, sir?

*Sir Anth.* To please my father! Zounds! not to please——Oh, my father——Odso! yes, yes; if my father, indeed, had desired—that's quite another matter. Though he was not the indulgent father that I am, Jack.

*Abs.* I dare say not, sir.

*Sir Anth.* But, Jack, you are not sorry to find your mistress is so beautiful?

*Abs.* Sir, I repeat it, if I please you in this affair, 'tis all I desire. Not that I think a woman the worse for being handsome; but, sir, if you please to recollect, you before hinted something about a hump or two, one eye, and a few more graces of that kind. Now, without being very nice, I own I should rather choose a wife of mine to have the usual number of limbs, and a limited quantity of back: and though one eye may be very agreeable, yet, as the prejudice has always run in favour of two, I would not wish to affect a singularity in that article.

*Sir Anth.* What a phlegmatic sot it is! Why, sirrah, you're an anchorite! a vile, insensible stock! You a soldier! you're a walking block, fit only to dust the company's regimentals on! Odds life! I've a great mind to marry the girl myself!

*Abs.* I am entirely at your disposal, sir; if you should think of addressing Miss Languish yourself, I suppose you would have me marry the aunt: or, if you should change your mind, and take the old lady, 'tis the same to me, I'll marry the niece.

*Sir Anth.* Upon my word, Jack, thou'rt either a very great hypocrite, or——but, come, I know your indifference on such a subject must be all a lie—I'm sure it must—come, now—damn your demure face! Come, confess, Jack; you have been lying, ha'n't you? You have been playing the hypocrite, hey? I'll never forgive you, if you ha'n't been lying and playing the hypocrite.

*Abs.* I'm sorry, sir, that the respect and duty which I bear to you should be so mistaken.

*Sir Anth.* Hang your respect and duty! But, come along with me; I'll write a note to Mrs Malaprop, and you shall visit the lady directly. Her eyes shall be the Promethian torch to you——Come along! I'll never forgive you, if you don't come back stark mad with rapture and impatience—if you don't, egad, I'll marry the girl myself!

[*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—JULIA'S *dressing-room.*

*Enter* FAULKLAND.

*Faulk.* They told me Julia would return directly; I wonder she is not yet come! How mean does this captious, unsatisfied temper of mine appear to my cooler judgment! Yet I know not that I indulge it in any other point: but on this one subject, and to this one subject, whom I think I love beyond my life, I am ever ungenerously fretful and madly capricious! I am conscious of it; yet I cannot correct myself! What tender, honest joy sparkled in her eyes when we met! How delicate was the warmth of her expressions! I was ashamed to appear less happy, though I had come resolved to wear a face of coolness and upbraiding. Sir Anthony's presence prevented my proposed expostulations: yet I must be satisfied that she has not been so very happy in my absence. She is coming! Yes! I know the nimbleness of her tread, when she thinks her impatient Faulkland counts the moments of her stay.

*Enter* JULIA.

*Julia.* I had not hoped to see you again so soon.

*Faulk.* Could I, Julia, be contented with my first welcome, restrained as we were by the presence of a third person?

*Julia.* O Faulkland, when your kindness can make me thus happy, let me not think that I discovered something of coldness in your first salutation!

*Faulk.* 'Twas but your fancy, Julia. I was rejoiced to see you—to see you in such health. Sure I had no cause for coldness?

*Julia.* Nay, then, I see you have taken something ill. You must not conceal from me what it is.

*Faulk.* Well, then—shall I own to you, that my joy at hearing of your health and arrival here, by your neighbour Acres, was somewhat damped by his dwelling much on the high spirits you had enjoyed in Devonshire—on your mirth, your singing, dancing, and I know not what!—For such is my temper, Julia, that I should regard every mirthful moment in your absence as a treason to constancy: The mutual tear that steals down the cheek of parting lovers is a compact, that no smile shall live there till they meet again.

*Julia.* Must I never cease to tax my Faulkland with this teasing, minute caprice? Can the idle reports of a silly boor weigh in your breast against my tried affection?

*Faulk.* They have no weight with me, Julia: No, no; I am happy if you have been so. Yet only say, that you did not sing with mirth; say that you thought of Faulkland in the dance!

*Julia.* I never can be happy in your absence! If I wear a countenance of content, it is to shew that my mind holds no doubt of my Faulkland's truth. If I seemed sad, it were to make malice triumph; and say, that I had fixed my heart on one, who left me to lament his roving, and my own credulity. Believe me, Faulkland, I mean not to upbraid you, when I say, that I have often dressed sorrow in smiles, lest my friends should guess whose unkindness had caused my tears.

*Faulk.* You were ever all goodness to me! O, I am a brute, when I but admit a doubt of your true constancy!

*Julia.* If ever, without such cause from you, as I will not suppose possible, you find my affection veering but a point, may I become a proverbial scoff for levity and base ingratitude!

*Faulk.* Ah, Julia, that last word is grating to me! I would I had no title to your gratitude! Search your heart, Julia; perhaps, what you have mistaken for love, is but the warm effusion of a too thankful heart!

*Julia.* For what quality must I love you?

*Faulk.* For no quality! To regard me for any quality of mind or understanding, were only to esteem me. And for person—I have often wished myself deformed, to be convinced that I owed no obligation there for any part of your affection.

*Julia.* Where nature has bestowed a show of nice attention in the features of a man, he should laugh at it as misplaced. I have seen men, who, in this vain article, perhaps, might rank above you; but my heart has never asked my eyes if it were so or not.

*Faulk.* Now, this is not well from you, Julia; I despise person in a man—yet, if you loved me as I wish, though I were an Æthiop, you'd think none so fair.

*Julia.* I see you are determined to be unkind. The contract, which my poor father bound us in, gives you more than a lover's privilege.

*Faulk.* Again, Julia, you raise ideas that feed and justify my doubts. I would not have been more free—no! I am proud of my restraint. Yet, yet—perhaps your high respect alone for this solemn compact has fettered your inclinations, which, else, had made a worthier choice. How shall I be sure, had you remained unbound in thought and promise, that I should still have been the object of your persevering love?

*Julia.* Then try me now. Let us be free as strangers as to what is past: my heart will not feel more liberty.

*Faulk.* There now! So hasty, Julia! So anxious to be free! If your love for me were fixed and ardent, you would not lose your hold, even though I wished it!

*Julia.* Oh, you torture me to the heart! I cannot bear it.

*Faulk.* I do not mean to distress you. If I loved you less, I should never give you an uneasy moment. But hear me. All my fretful doubts arise from this. Women are not used to weigh and separate the motives of their affections: the cold dictates of prudence, gratitude, or filial duty, may sometimes be mistaken for the pleadings of the heart. I would not boast; yet let me say, that I have neither age, person, or character, to found dislike on; my fortune such as few ladies could be charged with indiscretion in the match. O Julia! when love receives such countenance from prudence, nice minds will be suspicious of its birth.

*Julia.* I know not whither your insinuations would tend: but as they seem pressing to insult me, I will spare you the regret of having done so. I have given you no cause for this!

[*Exit, in tears.*

*Faulk.* In tears! Stay, Julia: stay but for a moment. The door is fastened! Julia; my soul—but for one moment: I hear her sobbing! 'Sdeath! What a brute am I to use her thus! Yet stay. Ay; she is coming now: How little resolution there is in woman! How a few soft words can turn them! No, faith! She is not coming, either. Why, Julia! my love! say but that

you forgive me; come but to tell me that; now this is being too resentful: stay! she is coming too; I thought she would: no steadiness in any thing! Her going away must have been a mere trick, then; she shan't see that I was hurt by it. I'll affect indifference—[*Hums a tune: then listens.*]—No; zounds! She is not coming! Nor don't intend it, I suppose. This is not steadiness, but obstinacy. Yet I deserve it. What, after so long an absence to quarrel with her tenderness! 'Twas barbarous and unmanly! I should be ashamed to see her now. I'll wait till her just resentment is abated; and when I distress her so again, may I lose her for ever! And be linked, instead, to some antique virago, whose gnawing passions, and long hoarded spleen, shall make me curse my folly half the day, and all the night. [*Exit.*

SCENE III.—MRS MALAPROP'S *lodgings.*

*Enter* MRS MALAPROP, *with a letter in her hand, and* CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

*Mrs Mal.* Your being sir Anthony's son, captain, would itself be a sufficient accommodation; but, from the ingenuity of your appearance, I am convinced you deserve the character here given of you.

*Abs.* Permit me to say, madam, that, as I never yet have had the pleasure of seeing Miss Languish, my principal inducement, in this affair, at present, is the honour of being allied to Mrs Malaprop; of whose intellectual accomplishments, elegant manners, and unaffected learning, no tongue is silent.

*Mrs Mal.* Sir, you do me infinite honour! I beg, captain, you'll be seated.—[*Sit.*]—Ah! few gentlemen, now-a-days, know how to value the ineffectual qualities in a woman! Few think how a little knowledge becomes a gentlewoman! Men have no sense, now, but for the worthless flower of beauty!

*Abs.* It is but too true, indeed, madam; yet I fear our ladies should share the blame; they think our admiration of beauty so great, that knowledge in them would be superfluous. Thus, like garden trees, they seldom shew fruit, till time has robbed them of the more specious blossom. Few, like Mrs Malaprop and the orange-tree, are rich in both at once!

*Mrs Mal.* Sir, you overpower me with good-breeding; he is the very pine-apple of politeness. You are not ignorant, captain, that this giddy girl has somehow contrived to fix her affections on a beggarly, strolling, eve's-dropping ensign, whom none of us have seen, and nobody knows any thing of.

*Abs.* O, I have heard the silly affair before.—I am not at all prejudiced against her on that account.

*Mrs Mal.* You are very good, and very considerate, captain. I am sure I have done every thing in my power, since I exploded the affair; long ago I laid my positive conjunctions on her, never to think on the fellow again. I have since laid sir Anthony's preposition before her; but, I am sorry to say, she seems resolved to decline every particle that I enjoin her.

*Abs.* It must be very distressing, indeed, madam.

*Mrs Mal.* Oh! it gives me the hydrostatics to such a degree! I thought she had persisted from corresponding with him; but, behold, this very day, I have interceded another letter from the fellow; I believe I have it in my pocket.

*Abs.* O the devil! my last note. [*Aside.*

*Mrs Mal.* Ay; here it is.

*Abs.* Ay; my note indeed! O the little traitress Lucy! [*Aside.*

*Mrs Mal.* There; perhaps you may know the writing.

[*Gives him the letter.*

*Abs.* I think I have seen the hand before; yes, I certainly must have seen this hand before—

*Mrs Mal.* Nay; but read it, captain.

*Abs.* [*Reads.*]—'My soul's idol; my adored Lydia!' Very tender, indeed!

*Mrs Mal.* Tender! ay, and prophane, too, o' my conscience!

*Abs.* 'I am excessively alarmed at the intelli-'gence you send me; the more so, as my new ri-'val'———

*Mrs Mal.* That's you, sir.

*Abs.* 'Has universally the character of being 'an accomplished gentleman, and a man of ho-'nour.' Well, that's handsome enough.

*Mrs Mal.* O, the fellow has some design in writing so.

*Abs.* That he had; I'll answer for him, madam.

*Mrs Mal.* But go on, sir; you'll see presently.

*Abs.* 'As for the old weather-beaten she-dra-'gon, who guards you,'—Who can he mean by that?

*Mrs Mal.* Me, sir: me: he means me there; what do you think, now? But go on a little further.

*Abs.* Impudent scoundrel!—'It shall go hard 'but I will elude her vigilance, as I am told that 'the same ridiculous vanity, which makes her 'dress up her coarse features, and deck her dull chat with hard words which she don't under-'stand'———

*Mrs Mal.* There, sir! an attack upon my language! What do you think of that? An aspersion upon my parts of speech! Was ever such a brute! Sure, if I reprehend any thing in this world, it is the use of my oracular tongue, and a nice derangement of epitaphs!

*Abs.* He deserves to be hanged and quartered! Let me see—'same ridiculous vanity'——

*Mrs Mal.* You need not read it again, sir.

*Abs.* I beg pardon, madam—'does also lay

'her open to the grossest deceptions from flat-
'tery and pretended admiration;'—an impudent coxcomb!—'so that I have a scheme to see you 'shortly with the old harridan's consent, and 'even to make her a go-between in our inter-'view.' Was ever such assurance!

*Mrs Mal.* Did you ever hear any thing like it? He'll elude my vigilance, will he—yes, yes! Ha, ha! he's very likely to enter these doors! We'll try who can plot best!

*Abs.* So we will, madam; so we will. Ha, ha, ha! a conceited puppy, ha, ha, ha! Well, but, Mrs Malaprop, as the girl seems so infatuated by this fellow, suppose you were to wink at her corresponding with him for a little time—let her even plot an elopement with him—then do you connive at her escape—while I, just in the nick, will have the fellow laid by the heels, and fairly contrive to carry her off in his stead!

*Mrs Mal.* I am delighted with the scheme! never was any thing better perpetrated!

*Abs.* But, pray, could not I see the lady for a few minutes, now? I should like to try her temper a little.

*Mrs Mal.* Why, I don't know; I doubt she is not prepared for a visit of this kind. There is a decorum in these matters.

*Abs.* O Lord! she won't mind me; only tell her Beverley———

*Mrs Mal.* Sir!

*Abs.* Gently, good tongue! [*Aside.*

*Mrs Mal.* What did you say of Beverley?

*Abs.* O, I was going to propose that you should tell her, by way of jest, that it was Beverley who was below; she'd come down fast enough then—ha, ha, ha!

*Mrs Mal.* 'Twould be a trick she well deserves; besides, you know the fellow tells her he'll get my consent to her; ha, ha! Let him if he can, I say again. Lydia, come down here!—[*Calling.*]—He'll make me a go-between in their interviews! Ha, ha, ha! Come down, I say, Lydia! I don't wonder at your laughing; ha, ha, ha! His impudence is truly ridiculous.

*Abs.* 'Tis very ridiculous, upon my soul, madam! ha, ha, ha!

*Mrs Mal.* The little hussy won't hear. Well, I'll go and tell her at once who it is; she shall know that captain Absolute is come to wait on her. And I'll make her behave as becomes a young woman.

*Abs.* As you please, madam.

*Mrs Mal.* For the present, captain, your servant. Ah! you've not done laughing yet, I see; elude my vigilance! yes, yes; ha, ha, ha!

[*Exit* MRS MAL.

*Abs.* Ha, ha, ha! One would think, now, that I might throw off all disguise at once, and seize my prize with security; but such is Lydia's caprice, that to undeceive were probably to lose her. I'll see whether she knows me.

[*Walks aside, and seems engaged in looking at the pictures.*

*Enter* LYDIA.

*Lydia.* What a scene am I now to go through! Surely nothing can be more dreadful, than to be obliged to listen to the loathsome addresses of a stranger to one's heart. I have heard of girls, persecuted as I am, who have appealed in behalf of their favoured lover, to the generosity of his rival: suppose I were to try it—there stands the hated rival—an officer, too! But O how unlike my Beverley! I wonder he don't begin; truly, he seems a very negligent wooer! Quite at his ease, upon my word! I'll speak first; Mr Absolute!

*Abs.* Madam. [*Turns round.*

*Lydia.* O Heavens! Beverley!

*Abs.* Hush! hush, my life! softly! be not surprised!

*Lydia.* I am so astonished! and so terrified! and so overjoyed!——for Heaven's sake! how came you here?

*Abs.* Briefly——I have deceived your aunt—I was informed, that my new rival was to visit here this evening; and, contriving to have him kept away, have passed myself on her for captain Absolute.

*Lydia.* O charming!——And she really takes you for young Absolute?

*Abs.* O, she's convinced of it!

*Lydia.* Ha, ha, ha! I can't forbear laughing, to think how her sagacity is over-reached!

*Abs.* But we trifle with our precious moments ——such another opportunity may not occur—then let me now conjure my kind, my condescending angel, to fix the time when I may rescue her from undeserving persecution, and, with a licensed warmth, plead for my reward.

*Lydia.* Will you, then, Beverley, consent to forfeit that portion of my paltry wealth? that burden on the wings of love?

*Abs.* O, come to me—rich only thus—in loveliness!——Bring no portion to me but thy love—'twill be generous in you, Lydia—for well you know, it is the only dower your poor Beverley can repay.

*Lydia.* How persuasive are his words!—how charming will poverty be with him!

*Abs.* Ah! my soul, what a life will we then live! Love shall be our idol and support! we will worship him with a monastic strictness; abjuring all worldly toys, to centre every thought and action there! Proud of calamity, we will enjoy the wreck of wealth; while the surrounding gloom of adversity shall make the flame of our pure love show doubly bright. By Heavens! I would fling all goods of fortune from me with a prodigal hand, to enjoy the scene where I might clasp my Lydia to my bosom, and say, the world affords no smile to me—but here———[*Embracing her.*] If she holds out now, the devil is in it! [*Aside.*

*Lydia.* Now could I fly with him to the Anti-

podes! but my persecution is not yet come to a crisis.

*Enter* MRS MALAPROP, *listening.*

*Mrs Mal.* I am impatient to know how the little hussy deports herself. [*Aside.*

*Abs.* So pensive, Lydia!—Is, then, your warmth abated?

*Mrs Mal.* Warmth abated!—so, she has been in a passion, I suppose?

*Lydia.* No—nor ever can while I have life.

*Mrs Mal.* An ill-tempered little devil! She'll be in a passion all her life—will she?

*Lydia.* Think not the idle threats of my ridiculous aunt can ever have any weight with me.

*Mrs Mal.* Very dutiful, upon my word!

*Lydia.* Let her choice be captain Absolute, but Beverley is mine.

*Mrs Mal.* I am astonished at her assurance! To his face!—this is to his face!

*Abs.* Thus, then, let me enforce my suit. [*Kneeling.*

*Mrs Mar.* Aye, poor young man!—down on his knees intreating for pity!——I can contain no longer.—Why, thou vixen! I have overheard you!

*Abs.* O, confound her vigilance! [*Aside.*

*Mrs Mal.* Captain Absolute, I know not how to apologize for her shocking rudeness.

*Abs.* So—all's safe, I find. [*Aside.*]——I have hopes, madam, that time will bring the young lady————

*Mrs Mal.* O, there's nothing to be hoped for from her—she's as headstrong as an allegory on the banks of Nile!

*Lydia.* Nay, madam; what do you charge me with, now?

*Mrs Mal.* Why, thou unblushing rebel! did not you tell this gentleman, to his face, that you loved another better? did not you say you never would be his?

*Lydia.* No, madam, I did not.

*Mrs Mal.* Good Heavens! what assurance! Lydia, Lydia, you ought to know, that lying don't become a young woman! Did not you boast, that Beverley—that stroller Beverley, possessed your heart? Tell me that, I say!

*Lydia.* 'Tis true, madam, and none but Beverley————

*Mrs Mal.* Hold! hold, assurance! you shall not be so rude.

*Abs.* Nay; pray, Mrs Malaprop, don't stop the young lady's speech: she's very welcome to talk thus—it does not hurt me in the least, I assure you.

*Mrs Mal.* You are too good, captain—too amiably patient—but come with me, miss.——Let us see you again soon, captain—remember what we have fixed.

*Abs.* I shall, madam.

*Mrs Mal.* Come, take a graceful leave of the gentleman.

*Lydia.* May every blessing wait on my Beverley, my loved Bev————

*Mrs Mal.* Hussy! I'll choak the word in your throat!—Come along, come along!

[*Exeunt severally*—ABSOLUTE *kissing his hand to* LYDIA—MRS MALAPROP *stopping her from speaking.*

SCENE IV.—ACRES's *lodgings.*

ACRES *and* DAVID.—ACRES *as just dressed.*

*Acres.* Indeed, David! do you think I become it so?

*David.* You are quite another creature, believe me, master, by the mass! an' we've any luck, we shall see the Devon monkerony in all the print-shops in Bath!

*Acres.* Dress does make a difference, David.

*David.* 'Tis all in all, I think—difference! why, an' you were to go now to Clod-Hall, I am certain the old lady wouldn't know you: master Butler wouldn't believe his own eyes; and Mrs Pickle would cry, 'Lard preserve me!' our dairy-maid would come giggling to the door; and I warrant Dolly Tester, your honour's favourite, would blush like my waistcoat!——Oons! I'll hold a gallon, there an't a dog in the house but would bark, and I question whether Phillis would wag a hair of her tail!

*Acres.* Aye, David, there's nothing like polishing.

*David.* So I says of your honour's boots; but the boy never heeds me!

*Acres.* But, David, has Mr De-la-grace been here? I must rub up my balancing, and chasing, and boring.

*David.* I'll call again, sir.

*Acres.* Do—and see if there are any letters for me at the post-office.

*David.* I will. By the mass, I can't help looking at your head! If I hadn't been by at the cooking, I wish I may die if I should have known the dish again myself! [*Exit.*

ACRES *comes forward, practising a dancing step.*

*Acres.* Sink, slide—coupee—Confound the first inventors of cotillons, say I!—they are as bad as algebra to us country gentlemen—I can walk a minuet easy enough, when I am forced—and I have been accounted a good stick in a country-dance.——Odds jiggs and tabors!—I never valued your cross-over to couple—figure in—right and left—and I'd foot it with e'er a captain in the county!—but these outlandish heathen allemandes and cotillons are quite beyond me!—I shall never prosper at them, that's sure—mine are true-born English legs—they don't understand their curst French lingo!—their *pas* this, and *pas* that, and *pas* t'other!—Damn me! my feet don't like to be called paws! no, 'tis certain I have most antigallican toes!

*Enter* SERVANT.

*Ser.* Here is sir Lucius O'Trigger to wait on you, sir.

*Acres.* Shew him in.

*Enter* SIR LUCIUS.

*Sir Luc.* Mr Acres, I am delighted to embrace you.

*Acres.* My dear sir Lucius, I kiss your hands.

*Sir Luc.* Pray, my friend, what has brought you so suddenly to Bath?

*Acres.* Faith! I have followed Cupid's jack-a-lantern, and find myself in a quagmire at last! In short, I have been very ill-used, sir Lucius. I don't choose to mention names; but look on me as on a very ill-used gentleman.

*Sir Luc.* Pray, what is the case? I ask no names.

*Acres.* Mark me, sir Lucius: I fall as deep as need be in love with a young lady—her friends take my part—I follow her to Bath—send word of my arrival—and receive answer, that the lady is to be otherwise disposed of! This, sir Lucius, I call being ill-used.

*Sir Luc.* Very ill, upon my conscience! Pray, can you divine the cause of it?

*Acres.* Why, there's the matter; she has another lover, one Beverley, who, I am told, is now in Bath.—Odds slanders and lies! he must be at the bottom of it!

*Sir Luc.* A rival in the case, is there? And you think he has supplanted you unfairly?

*Acres.* Unfairly! to be sure he has. He never could have done it fairly.

*Sir Luc.* Then, sure you know what is to be done?

*Acres.* Not I, upon my soul!

*Sir Luc.* We wear no swords here; but you understand me?

*Acres.* What! fight him?

*Sir Luc.* Aye, to be sure; what can I mean else?

*Acres.* But he has given me no provocation.

*Sir Luc.* Now, I think he has given you the greatest provocation in the world. Can a man commit a more heinous offence against another, than to fall in love with the same woman? O, by my soul! it is the most unpardonable breach of friendship.

*Acres.* Breach of friendship! Aye, aye; but I have no acquaintance with this man. I never saw him in my life.

*Sir Luc.* That's no argument at all; he has the less right, then, to take such a liberty.

*Acres.* Gad! that's true—I grow full of anger, sir Lucius! I fire apace! Odds hilts and blades! I find a man may have a deal of valour in him, and not know it! But couldn't I contrive to have a little right of my side?

*Sir Luc.* What the devil signifies right, when your honour is concerned? Do you think Achilles, or my little Alexander the Great, ever inquired where the right lay? No, by my soul! they drew their broad swords, and left the lazy sons of peace to settle the justice of it.

*Acres.* Your words are a grenadier's march to my heart! I believe courage must be catching! I certainly do feel a kind of valour rising as it were—a kind of courage, as I may say——Odds flints, pans, and triggers! I'll challenge him directly.

*Sir Luc.* Ah, my little friend! if I had Blunderbuss-hall here—I could show you a range of ancestry, in the O'Trigger line, that would furnish the new room! every one of whom had killed his man! For though the mansion-house and dirty acres have slipt through my fingers, I thank Heaven, our honour, and the family-pictures, are as fresh as ever!

*Acres.* O, sir Lucius, I have had ancestors, too!—every man of them colonel or captain in the militia!——Odds balls and barrels! say no more—I'm braced for it!—The thunder of your words has soured the milk of human kindness in my breast!——Zounds! as the man in the play says, 'I could do such deeds——'

*Sir Luc.* Come, come; there must be no passion at all in the case—these things should always be done civilly.

*Acres.* I must be in a passion, sir Lucius——I must be in a rage.—Dear sir Lucius, let me be in a rage, if you love me.—Come, here's pen and paper. [*Sits down to write.*] I would the ink were red!—Indite, I say indite!—How shall I begin! Odds bullets and blades! I'll write a good bold hand, however.

*Sir Luc.* Pray, compose yourself.

*Acres.* Come—now, shall I begin with an oath? Do, sir Lucius, let me begin with a damme!

*Sir Luc.* Pho, pho! do the thing decently, and like a Christian. Begin now—'Sir——

*Acres.* That's too civil by half.

*Sir Luc.* 'To prevent the confusion that might 'arise——'

*Acres.* Well——

*Sir Luc.* 'From our both addressing the same 'lady——'

*Acres.* Aye; there's the reason—'same lady—' Well——

*Sir Luc.* 'I shall expect the honour of your 'company——

*Acres.* Zounds! I'm not asking him to dinner!

*Sir Luc.* Pray, be easy.

*Acres.* Well, then—'honour of your company——'

*Sir Luc.* 'To settle our pretensions——'

*Acres.* Well.

*Sir Luc.* Let me see; aye, King's Mead-field will do——'in King's Mead-fields.'

*Acres.* So that's done.——Well, I'll fold it up presently; my own crest——a hand and dagger shall be the seal.

*Sir Luc.* You see, now, this little explanation

will put a stop, at once, to all confusion or misunderstanding that might arise between you.

*Acres.* Aye, we fight to prevent any misunderstanding.

*Sir Luc.* Now, I'll leave you to fix your own time. Take my advice, and you'll decide it this evening, if you can; then let the worst come of it, 'twill be off your mind to-morrow.

*Acres.* Very true.

*Sir Luc.* So I shall see nothing more of you, unless it be by letter, till the evening. I would do myself the honour to carry your message; but, to tell you a secret, I believe I shall have just such another affair on my own hands. There is a gay captain here, who put a jest on me lately, at the expence of my country, and I only want to fall in with the gentleman, to call him out.

*Acres.* By my valour, I should like to see you fight first! Odds life! I should like to see you kill him, if it was only to get a little lesson.

*Sir Luc.* I shall be very proud of instructing you.——Well, for the present—but remember now, when you meet your antagonist, do every thing in a mild and agreeable manner. Let your courage be as keen, but, at the same time, as polished as your sword. [*Exeunt severally.*

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.—ACRES' *lodgings.*

*Enter* ACRES *and* DAVID.

*David.* THEN, by the mass, sir, I would do no such thing!—ne'er a sir Lucius O'Trigger in the kingdom should make me fight, when I wa'n't so minded. Oons! what will the old lady say, when she hears o't?

*Acres.* Ah! David, if you had heard sir Lucius! Odds sparks and flames! he would have roused your valour.

*David.* Not he, indeed. I hates such bloodthirsty cormorants. Look'ee, master, if you'd wanted a bout at boxing, quarter-staff, or short-staff, I should never be the man to bid you cry, off: But for your curst sharps and snaps, I never knew any good come of them.

*Acres.* But my honour, David, my honour! I must be very careful of my honour.

*David.* Aye, by the mass! and I would be very careful of it; and I think, in return, my honour couldn't do less than to be very careful of me.

*Acres.* Odds blades, David! no gentleman will ever risk the loss of his honour!

*David.* I say, then, it would be but civil in honour never to risk the loss of a gentleman—— Look'ee, master, this honour seems to me to be a marvellous false friend! aye, truly, a very courtier-like servant!—Put the case: I was a gentleman (which, thank God! no one can say of me); well, my honour makes me quarrel with another gentleman of my acquaintance.——So, we fight. (Pleasant enough that!) Boh! I kill him! (the more's my luck). Now, pray, who gets the profit of it? Why, my honour!—But, put the case, that he kills me!——By the mass! I go to the worms, and my honour whips over to my enemy!

*Acres.* No, David---in that case! Odds crowns and laurels! your honour follows you to the grave.

*David.* Now, that's just the place where I could make a shift to do without it.

*Acres.* Zounds! David, you are a coward! It doesn't become my valour to listen to you. What, shall I disgrace my ancestors? Think of that, David; think what it would be to disgrace my ancestors!

*David.* Under favour, the surest way of not disgracing them, is to keep as long as you can out of their company. Look'e now, master, to go to them in such haste, with an ounce of lead in your brains! I should think might as well be let alone. Our ancestors are very good kind of folks; but they are the last people I should choose to have a visiting acquaintance with.

*Acres.* But, David, now, you don't think there is such very, very, very, very great danger! hey? Odds life! people often fight without any mischief done!

*David.* By the mass, I think 'tis ten to one against you!—Oons! here to meet some lion-headed fellow, I warrant, with his damned double-barrelled swords, and cut-and-thrust pistols! lord bless us! it makes me tremble to think o't!—Those be such desperate bloody-minded weapons! Well, I never could abide them! from a child I never could fancy them!—I suppose there a'n't been so merciless a beast in the world as your loaded pistol!

*Acres.* Zounds! I won't be afraid—Odds fire and fury! you shan't make me afraid.——Here is the challenge, and I have sent for my dear friend Jack Absolute to carry it for me.

*David.* Aye, in the name of mischief, let him be the messenger.---For my part, I wouldn't lend a hand to it for the best horse in your stable. By the mass! it don't look like another letter! It is, as I may say, a designing and malicious-looking letter; and I warrant smells of gunpowder like a soldier's pouch!---Oons! I wouldn't swear it may'nt go off!

*Acres.* Out, you poltroon!—you ha'n't the valour of a grass-hopper.

*David.* Well, I say no more; 'twill be sad news, to be sure, at Clod Hall! but I have done. How Phillis will howl when she hears of it!—Aye, poor bitch, she little thinks what shooting her master's going after! And I warrant old Crop, who has carried your honour, field and

road, these ten years, will curse the hour he was born. [*Whimpering.*

*Acres.* It won't do, David—I am determined to fight—so get along, you coward, while I'm in the mind.

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Captain Absolute, sir.

*Acres.* O! shew him up. [*Exit Servant.*

*David.* Well, Heaven send we be all alive this time to-morrow!

*Acres.* What's that?—Don't provoke me, David!

*David.* Good bye, master. [*Whimpering.*

*Acres.* Get along, you cowardly, dastardly, croaking raven. [*Exit* DAVID.

*Enter* ABSOLUTE.

*Abs.* What's the matter, Bob?

*Acres.* A vile, sheep-hearted blockhead!—If I hadn't the valour of St George and the dragon to boot—

*Abs.* But what did you want with me, Bob?

*Acres.* O!—There—[*Gives him the challenge.*]

*Abs.* 'To ensign Beverley.' So, what's going on now? [*Aside.*] Well, what's this?

*Acres.* A challenge!

*Abs.* Indeed!—Why, you won't fight him, will you, Bob?

*Acres.* 'Egad, but I will, Jack.—Sir Lucius has wrought me to it. He has left me full of rage, and I'll fight this evening, that so much good passion mayn't be wasted.

*Abs.* But what have I to do with this?

*Acres.* Why, as I think you know something of this fellow, I want you to find him out for me, and give him this mortal defiance.

*Abs.* Well, give it to me, and trust me he gets it.

*Acres.* Thank you, my dear friend, my dear Jack; but it is giving you a great deal of trouble.

*Abs.* Not in the least; I beg you won't mention it.—No trouble in the world, I assure you.

*Acres.* You are very kind.—What it is to have a friend!—You couldn't be my second—could you, Jack?

*Abs.* Why no, Bob, not in this affair; it would not be quite so proper.

*Acres.* Well, then, I must get my friend sir Lucius. I shall have your good wishes, however, Jack.

*Abs.* Whenever he meets you, believe me.

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Sir Anthony Absolute is below, inquiring for the captain.

*Abs.* I'll come instantly.—Well, my little hero, success attend you. [*Going.*

*Acres.* Stay, stay, Jack! If Beverley should ask you what kind of a man your friend Acres is, do tell him I am a devil of a fellow! will you Jack?

*Abs.* To be sure I shall.—I'll say you are a determined dog! hey, Bob?

*Acres.* Aye, do, do, do; and if that frightens him, 'egad, perhaps he mayn't come. So tell him I generally kill a man a-week; will you, Jack?

*Abs.* I will, I will; I'll say you are called in the country, Fighting Bob.

*Acres.* Right, right; 'tis all to prevent mischief; for I don't want to take his life, if I clear my honour.

*Abs.* No! that's very kind of you.

*Acres.* Why, you don't wish me to kill him? do you, Jack?

*Abs.* No, upon my soul, I do not.——But a devil of a fellow, hey? [*Going.*

*Acres.* True, true; but stay—stay, Jack—— you may add, that you never saw me in such a rage before; a most devouring rage!

*Abs.* I will, I will.

*Acres.* Remember, Jack—a determined dog!

*Abs.* Aye, aye; Fighting Bob!

[*Exeunt severally.*

SCENE II.—MRS MALAPROP'S *lodgings.*

MRS MALAPROP *and* LYDIA.

*Mrs Mal.* Why, thou perverse one! tell me what you can object to him? Isn't he a handsome man? tell me that.—A genteel man? a pretty figure of a man?

*Lydia.* She little thinks whom she is praising! [*Aside.*]—So is Beverley, madam.

*Mrs Mal.* No caparisons, miss, if you please. —Caparisons don't become a young woman.—No! captain Absolute is, indeed, a fine gentleman!

*Lydia.* Ay; the captain Absolute you have seen. [*Aside.*

*Mrs Mal.* Then, he's so well bred; so full of alacrity, and adulation!—and has so much to say for himself:—in such good language, too!—His physiognomy so grammatical:—Then, his presence is so noble: I protest, when I saw him, I thought of what Hamlet says in the play:—'Hesperian 'curls—the front of Job himself!—an eye, like 'March, to threaten at command!—a station, 'like Harry Mercury, new—' Something about kissing—on a hill—however, the similitude struck me directly.

*Lydia.* How enraged she'll be presently when she discovers her mistake! [*Aside.*

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* Sir Anthony and captain Absolute are below, madam.

*Mrs Mal.* Shew them up here. [*Exit Servant.*] Now, Lydia, I insist on your behaving as becomes a young woman.—Shew your good breeding, at least, though you have forgot your duty.

*Lydia.* Madam, I have told you my resolution!—I shall not only give him no encouragement, but I won't even speak to, or look at him.

[*Flings herself into a chair, with her face from the door.*]

*Enter* SIR ANTHONY, *and* ABSOLUTE.

*Sir Anth.* Here we are, Mrs Malaprop, come to mitigate the frowns of unrelenting beauty; and difficulty enough I had to bring this fellow.—I don't know what's the matter; but, if I had not held him by force, he'd have given me the slip.

*Mrs Mal.* You have infinite trouble, sir Anthony, in the affair.—I am ashamed for the cause! Lydia, Lydia, rise, I beseech you!—pay your respects! [*Aside to her.*

*Sir Anth.* I hope, madam, that miss Languish has reflected on the worth of this gentleman, and the regard due to her aunt's choice, and my alliance.—Now, Jack, speak to her. [*Aside to him.*

*Abs.* What the devil shall I do? [*Aside.*] You see, sir, she won't even look at me, whilst you are here. I knew she would not!—I told you so—Let me entreat you, sir, to leave us together!

[ABSOLUTE *seems to expostulate with his father.*]

*Lydia.* [*Aside.*] I wonder I have not heard my aunt exclaim yet! sure she can't have looked at him!———perhaps their regimentals are alike, and she is something blind.

*Sir Anth.* I say, sir, I won't stir a foot, yet.

*Mrs Mal.* I am sorry to say, sir Anthony, that my affluence over my niece is very small.—Turn round, Lydia; I blush for you! [*Aside to her.*

*Sir Anth.* May I not flatter myself, that Miss Languish will assign what cause of dislike she can have to my son!—Why don't you begin, Jack?—Speak, you puppy—speak! [*Aside to him.*

*Mrs Mal.* It is impossible, sir Anthony, she can have any.—She will not say she has.——— Answer, hussy! why don't you answer? [*Aside to her.*

*Sir Anth.* Then, madam, I trust that a childish and hasty predilection will be no bar to Jack's happiness.———Zounds, sirrah, why don't you speak? [*Aside to him.*

*Lydia.* [*Aside.*] I think my lover seems as little inclined to conversation as myself.——How strangely blind my aunt must be!

*Abs.* Hem, hem! Madam, hem! [ABSOLUTE *attempts to speak, then returns to* SIR ANTHONY.] Faith, sir, I am so confounded! and so, so confused! I told you I should be so, sir; I knew it. The—the—tremor of my passion entirely takes away my presence of mind.

*Sir Anth.* But it don't take away your voice, fool, does it? Go up, and speak to her directly!

[ABSOLUTE *makes signs to* MRS MALAPROP *to leave them together.*]

*Mrs Mal.* Sir Anthony, shall we leave them together? Ah, you stubborn little vixen!

[*Aside to her.*

*Sir Anth.* Not yet, madam, not yet! what the devil are you at? unlock your jaws, sirrah, or—

[*Aside to him.*

[ABSOLUTE *draws near* LYDIA.]

*Abs.* Now Heaven send she may be too sullen to look round! I must disguise my voice. [*Aside. Speaks in a low hoarse tone.*] Will not Miss Languish lend an ear to the mild accents of true love? Will not——

*Sir Anth.* What the devil ails the fellow Why don't you speak out? not stand croaking like a frog in a quinsey!

*Abs.* The—the—excess of my awe, and my—my—my modesty, quite choak me!

*Sir Anth.* Ah, your modesty again! I'll tell you what, Jack, if you don't speak out directly, and glibly, too, I shall be in such a rage! Mrs Malaprop, I wish the lady would favour us with something more than a side front.

[MRS MALAPROP *seems to chide* LYDIA.

*Abs.* So all will out, I see! [*Goes up to* LYDIA—*speaks softly.*] Be not surprised, my Lydia; suppress all surprise at present.

*Lydia.* [*Aside.*] Heavens! 'tis Beverley's voice! Sure he can't have imposed on sir Anthony, too! [*Looks round by degrees, then starts up.*] Is this possible! my Beverley! how can this be, my Beverley?

*Abs.* Ah, 'tis all over! [*Aside.*

*Sir Anth.* Beverley! the devil! Beverley! What can the girl mean? This is my son, Jack Absolute.

*Mrs Mal.* For shame, hussy; for shame! your head runs so on that fellow, that you have him always in your eyes; beg captain Absolute's pardon directly.

*Lydia.* I see no captain Absolute, but my loved Beverley!

*Sir Anth.* Zounds, the girl's mad! her brain's turned by reading!

*Mrs Mal.* O' my conscience, I believe so! What do you mean by Beverley, hussy? You saw captain Absolute before to-day; there he is; your husband that shall be.

*Lydia.* With all my soul, madam! when I refuse my Beverley——

*Sir Anth.* O, she's as mad as Bedlam! or has this fellow been playing us a rogue's trick? Come here, sirrah; who the devil are you?

*Abs.* Faith, sir, I am not quite clear myself; but I'll endeavour to recollect.

*Sir Anth.* Are you my son, or not? Answer for your mother, you dog, if you won't for me.

*Mrs Mal.* Ay, sir, who are you? O mercy, I begin to suspect!

*Abs.* Ye powers of impudence, befriend me! [*Aside.*] Sir Anthony, most assuredly I am your wife's son; and that I sincerely believe myself

to be yours also, I hope my duty has always shewn. Mrs Malaprop, I am your most respectful admirer, and shall be proud to add affectionate nephew. I need not tell my Lydia, that she sees her faithful Beverley, who, knowing the singular generosity of her temper, assumed that name, and a station, which has proved a test of the most disinterested love, which he now hopes to enjoy in a more elevated character.

*Lydia.* So, there will be no elopement after all? [*Sullenly.*

*Sir Anth.* Upon my soul, Jack, thou art a very impudent fellow! to do you justice, I think I never saw a piece of more consummate assurance!

*Abs.* O, you flatter me, sir! you compliment —'tis my modesty, you know, sir; my modesty that has stood in my way.

*Sir Anth.* Well, I am glad you are not the dull, insensible varlet you pretended to be, however; I am glad you have made a fool of your father, you dog, I am: So this was your penitence, your duty, and obedience! I thought it was damned sudden! You never heard their names before, not you! What, the Languishes of Worcestershire, hey? If you could please me in the affair, 'twas all you desired! Ah, you dissembling villain! What! [*Pointing to* LYDIA.] she squints, don't she? a little red-haired girl! hey? Why, you hypocrital young rascal! I wonder you are not ashamed to hold up your head!

*Abs.* 'Tis with difficulty, sir; I am confused —very much confused, as you must perceive.

*Mrs Mal.* O, lud, sir Anthony! a new light breaks in upon me! hey! how! what! Captain, did you write the letters, then? What, am I to thank you for the elegant compilation of 'an old, 'weather-beaten she-dragon,' hey? O mercy! was it you that reflected on my parts of speech?

*Abs.* Dear sir, my modesty will be overpowered, at last, if you don't assist me. I shall certainly not be able to stand it!

*Sir Anth.* Come, come, Mrs Malaprop, we we must forget and forgive; odd's life! matters have taken so clever a turn all of a sudden, that I could find in my heart, to be so good-humoured! and so gallant—hey! Mrs Malaprop?

*Mrs Mal.* Well, sir Anthony, since you desire it, we will not anticipate the past; so mind, young people——our retrospection will be all to the future.

*Sir Anth.* Come, we must leave them together. Mrs Malaprop, they long to fly into each other's arms, I warrant. Jack, is not the cheek as I said, hey? and the eye, you rogue! and the lip: hey? Come, Mrs Malaprop, we'll not disturb their tenderness—their's is the time of life for happiness [*Sings.*].

*Youth's the season made for joy.*

Hey! Odd's life! I'm in such spirits; I don't know what I could not do! Permit me, madam. [*Gives his hand to* MRS MALAPROP.——[*Sings.*] *Tol-de-rol!* Egad, I should like to have a little fooling myself. *Tol-de-rol! derol*—

[*Exit, singing and handing* MRS MALAPROP.

[LYDIA *sits sullenly in her chair.*

*Abs.* So much thought bodes me no good. [*Aside.*

So grave, Lydia!

*Lydia.* Sir!

*Abs.* So! Egad, I thought as much! that damned monosyllable has froze me! [*Aside.*]—What, Lydia, now that we are as happy in our friends' consent, as in our mutual vows——

*Lydia.* Friends' consent, indeed! [*Peevishly.*

*Abs.* Come, come; we must lay aside some of our romance—a little wealth and comfort may be endured after all. And, for your fortune, the lawyers shall make such settlements as———

*Lydia.* Lawyers! I hate lawyers!

*Abs.* Nay, then, we will not wait for their lingering forms, but instantly procure the licence, and——

*Lydia.* The licence! I hate licence!

*Abs.* O, my love! be not so unkind! thus, let me intreat—— [*Kneeling.*

*Lydia.* Pshaw! what signifies kneeling, when you must I must have you?

*Abs.* [*Rising.*] Nay, madam, there shall be no constraint upon your inclinations, I promise you. If I have lost your heart, I resign the rest. 'Gad, I must try what a little spirit will do. [*Aside.*

*Lydia.* [*Rising.*] Then, sir, let me tell you, the interest you had there was acquired by a mean, unmanly imposition, and deserves the punishment of fraud. What, you have been treating me like a child! humouring my romance and laughing, I suppose, at your success?

*Abs.* You wrong me, Lydia, you wrong me; only hear——

*Lydia.* So, while I fondly imagined we were deceiving my relations, and flattered myself that I should outwit and incense them all——behold, my hopes are to be crushed at once, by my aunt's consent and approbation; and I am, myself, the only dupe, at last! [*Walking about in a heat.*] But, here, sir; here is the picture; Beverley's picture! [*Taking a miniature from her bosom.*] which I have worn, night and day, in spite of threats and entreaties. There, sir, [*Flings it to him.*] and be assured I throw the original from my heart as easily.

*Abs.* Nay, nay, madam; we will not differ as to that—Here, [*Taking out a picture.*] here is Miss Lydia Languish. What a difference! aye, there is the heavenly assenting smile, that first gave soul and spirit to my hopes! those are the lips, which sealed a vow, as yet scarce dry in Cupid's calendar; and there, the half resentful

blush, that would have checked the ardour of my thanks—Well, all that's past—all over, indeed. There, madam! in beauty, that copy is not equal to you; but, in my mind, it's merit over the original, in being still the same, is such—that—I cannot find in my heart to part with it.

[*Puts it up again.*

*Lydia.* [*Softening.*] 'Tis your own doing, sir. I, I, I suppose you are perfectly satisfied?

*Abs.* O, most certainly! sure, now, this is much better than being in love—ha, ha, ha! there's some spirit in this! What signifies breaking some scores of solemn promises: all that is of no consequence, you know. To be sure people will say, that Miss did not know her own mind—but never mind that; or, perhaps, they may be ill-natured enough to hint, that the gentleman grew tired of the lady and forsook her—but don't let that fret you.

*Lydia.* There's no bearing this insolence.

[*Bursts into tears.*

*Enter* MRS MALAPROP *and* SIR ANTHONY.

*Mrs Mal.* [*Entering.*] Come, we must interrupt your billing and cooing a while.

*Lydia.* This is worse than your treachery and deceit, you base ingrate! [*Sobbing.*

*Sir Anth.* What the devil's the matter now? Zounds, Mrs Malaprop, this is the oddest billing and cooing I ever heard! but what the deuce is the meaning of it? I am quite astonished!

*Abs.* Ask the lady, sir.

*Mrs Mal.* O, mercy, I am quite analysed for my part! Why, Lydia, what is the reason of this?

*Lydia.* Ask the gentleman, madam.

*Sir Anth.* Zounds! I shall be in a phrenzy! why, Jack, you are not come out to be any one else, are you?

*Mrs Mal.* Aye, sir, there's no more trick, is there? you are not like Cerberus, three gentlemen at once, are you?

*Abs.* You'll not let me speak—I say the lady can account for this much better than I can.

*Lydia.* Madam, you once commanded me never to think of Beverley again; there is the man; I now obey you: for, from this moment, I renounce him for ever. [*Exit* LYDIA.

*Mrs Mal.* O mercy and miracles! what a turn here is! why, sure captain, you haven't behaved disrespectfully to my niece?

*Sir Anth.* Ha, ha, ha! Ha, ha, ha! now I see it! Ha, ha, ha! now I see it! You have been too lively, Jack.

*Abs.* Nay, sir, upon my word!——

*Sir Anth.* Come, no lying, Jack. I'm sure 'twas so.

*Mrs Mal.* O Lud! Sir Anthony! O fie, Captain!

*Abs.* Upon my soul, madam——

*Sir Anth.* Come, no excuses, Jack! why, your father, you rogue, was so before you: the blood of the Absolutes was always impatient! Ha, ha, ha! poor little Lydia! Why, you've frightened her, you dog, you have.

*Abs.* By all that's good, sir——

*Sir Anth.* Zounds! say no more, I tell you. Mrs Malaprop shall make your peace. You must make his peace, Mrs Malaprop: you must tell her 'tis Jack's way; tell her 'tis all our ways—it runs in the blood of our family! Come away, Jack—Ha, ha, ha! Mrs Malaprop—a young villain! [*Pushes him out.*

*Mrs Mal.* O, sir Anthony! O fie, captain!

[*Exeunt severally.*

## SCENE IV.—*The North Parade.*

*Enter* SIR LUCIUS O'TRIGGER.

*Sir Luc.* I wonder where this captain Absolute hides himself! Upon my conscience! these officers are always in one's way in love affairs: I remember I might have married lady Dorothy Carmine, if it had not been for a little rogue of a major, who ran away with her before she could get a sight of me! And I wonder, too, what it is the ladies can see in them to be so fond of them! Unless it be a touch of the old serpent in them, that makes the little creatures be caught, like vipers, with a bit of red cloth. Hah! isn't this the captain coming? faith it is! There is a probability of succeeding about that fellow, that is mighty provoking! Who the devil is he talking to? [*Steps aside.*

*Enter* CAPTAIN ABSOLUTE.

*Abs.* To what fine purpose I have been plotting! a noble reward for all my schemes, upon my soul! a little gypsey! I did not think her romance could have made her so damned absurd either. 'Sdeath, I never was in a worse humour in my life! I cou'd cut my own throat, or any other person's, with the greatest pleasure in the world!

*Sir Luc.* O, faith, I'm in the luck of it! I never could have found him in a sweeter temper for my purpose; to be sure, I'm just come in the nick! now to enter into conversation with him, and so quarrel genteely.

[SIR LUCIUS *goes up to* ABSOLUTE.

With regard to that matter, captain, I must beg leave to differ in opinion with you.

*Abs.* Upon my word, then, you must be a very subtle disputant; because, sir, I happened just then to be giving no opinion at all.

*Sir Luc.* That's no reason. For, give me leave to tell you, a man may think an untruth as well as speak one.

*Abs.* Very true, sir; but if a man never utters his thoughts, I should think they might stand a chance of escaping controversy.

*Sir Luc.* Then, sir, you differ in opinion with me, which amounts to the same thing.

*Abs.* Hark'e, sir Lucius; if I had not before

known you to be a gentleman, upon my soul, I should not have discovered it at this interview: for what you can drive at, unless you mean to quarrel with me, I cannot conceive!

*Sir Luc.* I humbly thank you, sir, for the quickness of your apprehension! [*Bowing.*] You have named the very thing I would be at.

*Abs.* Very well, sir; I shall certainly not baulk your inclinations: but I should be glad you would please to explain your motives?

*Sir Luc.* Pray, sir, be easy—the quarrel is a very pretty quarrel as it stands—we should only spoil it, by trying to explain it. However, your memory is very short, or you could not have forgot an affront you passed on me within this week. So, no more, but name your time and place.

*Abs.* Well, sir, since you are so bent on it, the sooner the better—let it be this evening—here by the Spring Gardens. We shall scarcely be interrupted.

*Sir Luc.* Faith! that same interruption in affairs of this nature shews very great ill-breeding. I don't know what's the reason; but in England, if a thing of this kind gets wind, people make such a pother, that a gentleman can never fight in peace and quietness. However, if its the same to you, captain, I should take it as a particular kindness, if you'd let us meet in King's-Mead Fields, as a little business will call me there about six o'clock, and I may dispatch both matters at once.

*Abs.* 'Tis the same to me exactly. A little after six, then, we'll discuss this matter more seriously.

*Sir Luc.* If you please, sir; there will be very pretty small-sword light, though it won't do for a long shot. So that matter's settled, and my mind's at ease. [*Exit* SIR LUCIUS.

*Enter* FAULKLAND, *meeting* ABSOLUTE.

*Abs.* Well met! I was going to look for you. O, Faulkland! all the demons of spite and disappointment have conspired against me! I'm so vexed, that if I had not the prospect of a resource in being knocked o' the head by and by, I should scarce have spirits to tell you the cause.

*Faulk.* What can you mean? Has Lydia changed her mind? I should have thought her duty and inclination would now have pointed to the same object.

*Abs.* Aye, just as the eyes do of a person who squints: when her love-eye was fixed on me, t'other, her eye of duty, was finely obliqued: but when duty bid her point that the same way, off t'other turned on a swivel, and secured its retreat with a frown!

*Faulk.* But what's the resource you——

*Abs.* O, to wind up the whole, a good-natured Irishman here has [*mimicking* SIR LUCIUS.] begged leave to have the pleasure of cutting my throat, and I mean to indulge him, that's all.

*Faulk.* Prithee, be serious.

*Abs.* 'Tis fact, upon my soul! Sir Lucius O'-Trigger—you know him by sight—for some affront, which I am sure I never intended, has obliged me to meet him this evening at six o'clock; 'tis on that account I wished to see you; you must go with me.

*Faulk.* Nay, there must be some mistake, sure. Sir Lucius shall explain himself; and, I dare say, matters may be accommodated: but this evening, did you say? I wish it had been any other time.

*Abs.* Why? there will be light enough: there will, as sir Lucius says, be very pretty small-sword light, though it will not do for a long shot. Confound his long shots!

*Faulk.* But I am myself a good deal ruffled, by a difference I have had with Julia—my vile tormenting temper has made me treat her so cruelly, that I shall not be myself till we are reconciled.

*Abs.* By Heavens, Faulkland, you don't deserve her!

*Enter Servant—gives* FAULKLAND *a letter.*

*Faulk.* O Jack! this is from Julia—I dread to open it—I fear it may be to take a last leave—perhaps to bid me return her letters—and restore———O! how I suffer for my folly!

*Abs.* Here—let me see.

[*Takes the letter and opens it.*

Ay, a final sentence indeed! 'tis all over with you, faith.

*Faulk.* Nay, Jack, don't keep me in suspense.

*Abs.* Hear then—'As I am convinced that my 'dear Faulkland's own reflections have already 'upbraided him for his last unkindness to me, I 'will not add a word on the subject. I wish to 'speak with you as soon as possible. Your's ever 'and truly, Julia.'—There's stubbornness and resentment for you! [*Gives him the letter.*

Why, man, you don't seem one whit the happier at this!

*Faulk.* O, yes, I am—but—but———

*Abs.* Confound your buts! You never hear any thing that would make another man bless himself, but you immediately damn it with a but!

*Faulk.* Now, Jack, as you are my friend, own honestly, don't you think there is something forward, something indelicate, in this haste to forgive? Women should never sue for reconciliation; that should always come from us. They should retain their coldness till wooed to kindness; and their pardon, like their love, should 'not unsought be won.'

*Abs.* I have not patience to listen to you: thou'rt incorrigible! so, say no more on the subject. I must go to settle a few matters—let me see you before six—remember—at my lodgings. A poor, industrious devil like me, who have toiled, and drudged, and plotted to gain my ends, and am at last disappointed by other people's folly, may, in

pity, be allowed to swear and grumble a little; but a captious sceptic in love, a slave to fretfulness and whim, who has no difficulties but of his own creating, is a subject more fit for ridicule than compassion! [*Exit.*

*Faulk.* I feel his reproaches: yet I would not change this too exquisite nicety, for the gross content with which he tramples on the thorns of love. His engaging me in this duel has started an idea in my head, which I will instantly pursue. I'll use it as the touchstone of Julia's sincerity and disinterestedness—if her love prove pure and sterling ore, my name will rest on it with honour! and once I have stamped it there, I lay aside my doubts for ever: but if the dross of selfishness, the allay of pride, predominate, 'twill be best to leave her as a toy for some less cautious fool to sigh for. [*Exit.*

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.—JULIA'S *dressing-room.*

JULIA *alone.*

*Julia.* How this message has alarmed me! what dreadful accident can he mean? why such charges to be alone?—O Faulkland! how many unhappy moments, how many tears, have you cost me!

*Enter* FAULKLAND.

What means this? why this caution, Faulkland?

*Faulk.* Alas! Julia, I come to take a long farewel.

*Julia.* Heavens! what do you mean?

*Faulk.* You see before you a wretch, whose life is forfeited. Nay, start not! the infirmity of my temper has drawn all this misery on me. I left you fretful and passionate—an untoward accident drew me into a quarrel; the event is, that I must fly this kingdom instantly. O Julia! had I been so fortunate as to have called you mine entirely, before this mischance had fallen on me, I should not so deeply dread my banishment!

*Julia.* My soul is oppressed with sorrow at the nature of your misfortune: had these adverse circumstances arisen from a less fatal cause, I should have felt strong comfort in the thought that I could now chase from your bosom every doubt of the warm sincerity of my love. My heart has long known no other guardian—I now intrust my person to your honour—we will fly together. When safe from pursuit, my father's will may be fulfilled, and I receive a legal claim to be the partner of your sorrows, and tenderest comforter. Then, on the bosom of your wedded Julia, you may lull your keen regret to slumbering; while virtuous love, with a cherub's hand, shall smooth the brow of upbraiding thought, and pluck the thorn from compunction.

*Faulk.* O Julia! I am bankrupt in gratitude! but the time is so pressing, it calls on you for so hasty a resolution! Would you not wish some hours to weigh the advantages you forego, and what little compensation poor Faulkland can make you, beside his solitary love?

*Julia.* I ask not a moment. No, Faulkland, I have loved you for yourself: and if I now, more than ever, prize the solemn engagement which so long has pledged us to each other, it is because it leaves no room for hard aspersions on my fame, and puts the seal of duty to an act of love. But let us not linger. Perhaps this delay———

*Faulk.* 'Twill be better I should not venture out again till dark. Yet am I grieved to think what numberless distresses will press heavy on your gentle disposition!

*Julia.* Perhaps your fortune may be forfeited by this unhappy act? I know not whether 'tis so, but sure that alone can never make us unhappy. The little I have will be sufficient to support us; and exile never should be splendid.

*Faulk.* Ay, but in such an abject state of life, my wounded pride, perhaps, may increase the natural fretfulness of my temper, till I become a rude, morose companion, beyond your patience to endure. Perhaps the recollection of a deed, my conscience cannot justify, may haunt me in such gloomy and unsocial fits, that I shall hate the tenderness that would relieve me, break from your arms, and quarrel with your fondness!

*Julia.* If your thoughts should assume so unhappy a bent, you will the more want some mild and affectionate spirit to watch over and console you: one who, by bearing your infirmities with gentleness and resignation, may teach you so to bear the evils of your fortune.

*Faulk.* Julia, I have proved you to the quick! and with this useless device I throw away all my doubts. How shall I plead to be forgiven this last unworthy effect of my restless, unsatisfied disposition?

*Julia.* Has no such disaster happened, as you related?

*Faulk.* I am ashamed to own, that it was pretended; yet, in pity, Julia, do not kill me with resenting a fault which never can be repeated: but sealing, this once, my pardon, let me to-morrow, in the face of Heaven, receive my future guide and monitress, and expiate my past folly, by years of tender adoration.

*Julia.* Hold, Faulkland!—that you are free from a crime, which I before feared to name, Heaven knows how sincerely I rejoice! These are tears of thankfulness for that! But that your cruel doubts should have urged you to an impo-

sition that has wrung my heart, gives me now a pang more keen than I can express!

*Faulk.* By Heavens! Julia———

*Julia.* Yet hear me.——My father loved you, Faulkland, and you preserved the life that tender parent gave me; in his presence I pledged my hand, joyfully pledged it, where before I had given my heart. When, soon after, I lost that parent, it seemed to me that Providence had, in Faulkland, shewn me whither to transfer, without a pause, my grateful duty, as well as my affection: hence, I have been content to bear from you, what pride and delicacy would have forbid me from another. I will not upbraid you, by repeating how you have trifled with my sincerity.———

*Faulk.* I confess it all! yet hear——

*Julia.* After such a year of trial, I might have flattered myself that I should not have been insulted with a new probation of my sincerity, as cruel as unnecessary! I now see it is not in your nature to be content, or confident in love. With this conviction, I never will be yours. While I had hopes, that my persevering attention, and unreproaching kindness, might, in time, reform your temper, I should have been happy to have gained a dearer influence over you; but I will not furnish you with a licensed power to keep alive an incorrigible fault, at the expence of one who never would contend with you.

*Faulk.* Nay, but, Julia, by my soul and honour, if, after this———

*Julia.* But one word more. As my faith has once been given to you, I never will barter it with another. I shall pray for your happiness with the truest sincerity; and the dearest blessing I can ask of Heaven to send you, will be, to charm you from that unhappy temper, which alone has prevented the performance of our solemn engagement. All I request of you is, that you will yourself reflect upon this infirmity; and when you number up the many true delights it has deprived you of, let it not be your least regret, that it lost you the love of one—who would have followed you in beggary through the world.

[*Exit.*

*Faulk.* She's gone for ever! There was an awful resolution in her manner, that rivetted me to my place. O fool! dolt! barbarian! Curst as I am, with more imperfections than my fellow-wretches, kind fortune sent a heaven-gifted cherub to my aid, and, like a ruffian, I have driven her from my side! I must now haste to my appointment. Well! my mind is tuned for such a scene. I shall wish only to become a principal in it, and reverse the tale my cursed folly put me upon forging here. O Love! tormentor! fiend! Whose influence, like the moon's, acting on men of dull souls, makes idiots of them; but, meeting subtler spirits, betrays their course, and urges sensibility to madness!

[*Exit* FAULK.

*Enter Maid and* LYDIA.

*Maid.* My mistress, madam, I know, was here just now; perhaps she is only in the next room.

[*Exit maid.*

*Lydia.* Heigh ho! Though he has used me so, this fellow runs strangely in my head. I believe one lecture from my grave cousin will make me recal him.

*Enter* JULIA.

O, Julia, I am come to you with such an appetite for consolation! Lud! Child, what's the matter with you? You have been crying! I'll be hanged, if that Faulkland has not been tormenting you!

*Julia.* You mistake the cause of my uneasiness! Something has flurried me a little. Nothing that you can guess at. I would not accuse Faulkland to a sister! [*Aside.*

*Lydia.* Ah! Whatever vexations you may have, I can assure you mine surpass them. You know who Beverley proves to be?

*Julia.* I will now own to you, Lydia, that Mr Faulkland had before informed me of the whole affair. Had young Absolute been the person you took him for, I should not have accepted your confidence on the subject, without a serious endeavour to counteract your caprice.

*Lydia.* So, then, I see I have been deceived by every one! But I don't care; I'll never have him.

*Julia.* Nay, Lydia———

*Lydia.* Why, is it not provoking? When I thought we were coming to the prettiest distress imaginable, to find myself made a mere Smithfield bargain of at last! There, had I projected one of the most sentimental elopements! So becoming a disguise! So amiable a ladder of ropes! Conscious moon—four horses---Scotch parson—with such surprise to Mrs Malaprop---and such paragraphs in the newspapers! O, I shall die with disappointment!

*Julia.* I don't wonder at it!

*Lydia.* Now—sad reverse! What have I to expect, but, after a deal of flimsy preparation with a bishop's licence, and my aunt's blessing, to go simpering up to the altar; or, perhaps, be cried three times in a country church, and have an unmannerly fat clerk ask the consent of every butcher in the parish to join John Absolute and Lydia Languish, spinster! O, that I should live to hear myself called spinster!

*Julia.* Melancholy, indeed!

*Lydia.* How mortifying, to remember the dear delicious shifts I used to be put to, to gain half a minute's conversation with this fellow! How often have I stole forth, in the coldest night in January, and found him in the garden, stuck like a dripping statue! There would he kneel to me in the snow, and sneeze and cough so pathetically! He shivering with cold, and I with apprehension!

And, while the freezing blast numbed our joints, how warmly would he press me to pity his flame, and glow with mutual ardour! Ah, Julia, that was something like being in love!

*Julia.* If I were in spirits, Lydia, I should chide you only by laughing heartily at you; but it suits more the situation of my mind, at present, earnestly to entreat you, not to let a man, who loves you with sincerity, suffer that unhappiness from your caprice, which I know too well caprice can inflict.

*Lydia.* O lud! What has brought my aunt here?

*Enter* MRS MALAPROP, FAG, *and* DAVID.

*Mrs Mal.* So, so! here's fine work! Here's fine suicide, parricide, and simulation going on in the fields! And sir Anthony not to be found to prevent the antistrophe!

*Julia.* For Heaven's sake, madam, what's the meaning of this?

*Mrs Mal.* That gentleman can tell you: 'twas he enveloped the affair.

*Lydia.* Do, sir; will you inform us?

[*To* FAG.

*Fag.* Madam, I should hold myself very deficient in every requisite that forms the man of breeding, if I delayed a moment to give all the information in my power to a lady so deeply interested in the affair as you are.

*Lydia.* But quick! Quick, sir!

*Fag.* True, madam, as you say, one should be quick in divulging matters of this nature; for should we be tedious, perhaps, while we are flourishing on the subject, two or three lives may be lost!

*Lydia.* O patience! Do, madam, for Heaven's sake, tell us what's the matter?

*Mrs Mal.* Why, murder's the matter! Slaughter's the matter! Killing's the matter! But he can tell you the perpendiculars.

*Lydia.* Then, prithee, sir, be brief.

*Fag.* Why, then, madam, as to murder, I cannot take upon me to say; and as to slaughter, or manslaughter, that will be as the jury finds it.

*Lydia.* But who, sir——who are engaged in this?

*Fag.* Faith, madam, one is a young gentleman whom I should be very sorry any thing was to happen to—a very pretty-behaved gentleman! We have lived much together, and always on terms.

*Lydia.* But who is this? Who, who, who!

*Fag.* My master, madam—my master—I speak of my master.

*Lydia.* Heavens! What, captain Absolute?

*Mrs Mal.* O, to be sure, you are frightened now!

*Julia.* But who are with him, sir?

*Fag.* As to the rest, madam, this gentleman can inform you better than I.

*Julia.* Do speak, friend. [*To* DAVID.

*David.* Look'ee, my lady——by the mass, there's mischief going on! Folks don't use to meet for amusement with fire-arms, fire-locks, fire-engines, fire-screens, fire-office, and the devil knows what other crackers beside! This, my lady, I say, has an angry favour.

*Julia.* But who is there beside captain Absolute, friend?

*David.* My poor master—under favour for mentioning him first. You know me, my lady—I am David—and my master of course is, or was, 'squire Acres. Then comes 'squire Faulkland.

*Julia.* Do, madam; let us instantly endeavour to prevent mischief!

*Mrs Mal.* O fie! it would be very inelegant in us: we should only participate things.

*David.* Ah! Do, Mrs Aunt, save a few lives; they are desperately given, believe me. Above all, there is that blood-thirsty Philistine, sir Lucius O'Trigger.

*Mrs Mal.* Sir Lucius O'Trigger! O mercy! Have they drawn poor little dear sir Lucius into the scrape? Why, how you stand, girl! You have no more feeling than one of the Derbyshire putrifactions!

*Lydia.* What are we to do, madam?

*Mrs Mal.* Why, fly with the utmost felicity, to be sure, to prevent mischief! Here, friend—you can shew us the place?

*Fag.* If you please, madam, I will conduct you. David, do you look for sir Anthony.

[*Exit* DAVID.

*Mrs Mal.* Come, girls; this gentleman will exhort us. Come, sir, you're our envoy; lead the way, and we'll precede.

*Fag.* Not a step before the ladies, for the world!

*Mrs Mal.* You're sure you know the spot?

*Fag.* I think I can find it, madam; and one good thing is, we shall hear the report of the pistols, as we draw near, so we can't well miss them; never fear, madam, never fear.

[*Exit, he talking.*

SCENE II.—*South Parade.*

*Enter* ABSOLUTE, *putting his sword under his great coat.*

*Abs.* A sword seen in the streets of Bath would raise as great an alarm as a mad dog. How provoking this is in Faulkland! Never punctual! I shall be obliged to go without him at last. O, the devil! Here's sir Anthony! How shall I escape him!

[*Muffles up his face, and takes a circle to go off.*

*Enter* SIR ANTHONY.

*Sir Anth.* How one may be deceived at a little distance! Only that I see he don't know me, I could have sworn that was Jack! Hey! Gad's life! It is. Why, Jack, what are you afraid of?

Hey! Sure I'm right. Why, Jack—Jack Absolute! [*Goes up to him.*

*Abs.* Really, sir, you have the advantage of me: I don't remember ever to have had the honour—my name is Saunderson, at your service.

*Sir Anth.* Sir, I beg your pardon—I took you —Hey? Why, zounds! It is—Stay——

[*Looks up to his face.*

So, so! your humble servant, Mr Saunderson! Why, you scoundrel, what tricks are you after now?

*Abs.* O! A joke, sir, a joke! I came here on purpose to look for you, sir.

*Sir Anth.* You did! Well, I am glad you were so lucky; but what are you muffled up so for? What's this for? Hey?

*Abs.* 'Tis cool, sir; isn't it? Rather chilly, somehow: but I shall be late—I have a particular engagement.

*Sir Anth.* Stay. Why, I thought you were looking for me? Pray, Jack, where is't you are going?

*Abs.* Going, sir!

*Sir Anth.* Ay; where are you going?

*Abs.* Where am I going?

*Sir Anth.* You unmannerly puppy!

*Abs.* I was going, sir, to—to—to—to Lydia—sir, to Lydia——to make matters up, if I could; and I was looking for you, sir, to—to——

*Sir Anth.* To go with you, I suppose? Well, come along.

*Abs.* O, zounds! no, sir, not for the world! I wished to meet with you, sir, to—to—to——You find it cool, I'm sure, sir—you'd better not stay out.

*Sir Anth.* Cool! not at all. Well, Jack, and what will you say to Lydia?

*Abs.* O, sir, beg her pardon, humour her; promise and vow——But I detain you, sir—consider the cold air on your gout!

*Sir Anth.* O, not at all, not at all—I'm in no hurry. Ah! Jack, you youngsters, when once you are wounded here! [*Putting his hand to* ABSOLUTE'S *breast.*] Hey! what the deuce have you got here?

*Abs.* Nothing, sir, nothing!

*Sir Anth.* What's this?——here's something damned hard!

*Abs.* O, trinkets, sir, trinkets! a bauble for Lydia!

*Sir Anth.* Nay; let me see your taste. [*Pulls his coat open, the sword falls.*] Trinkets! a bauble for Lydia!—Zounds, sirrah, you are not going to cut her throat, are you?

*Abs.* Ha, ha, ha! I thought it would divert you, sir, though I did not mean to tell you till afterwards.

*Sir Anth.* You did not?—Yes, this is a very diverting trinket, truly!

*Abs.* Sir, I'll explain to you. You know, sir, Lydia is romantic—devilish romantic, and very absurd, of course:——now, sir, I intend, if she refuses to forgive me, to sheath this sword—and swear, I'll fall upon its point, and expire at her feet!

*Sir Anth.* Fall upon a fiddle-stick's end! Why, I suppose it is the very thing that would please her—Get along, you fool!

*Abs.* Well, sir, you shall hear of my success—you shall hear.——O, Lydia! forgive me, or this pointed steel, says I!

*Sir Anth.* O, booby! stab away, and welcome, says she—Get along! and damn your trinkets!

[*Exit* ABSOLUTE.

*Enter* DAVID, *running.*

*David.* Stop him! Stop him! Murder! Thief! Fire! Stop fire! stop fire!—O, sir Anthony!—call, call! Bid him stop! Murder! Fire!

*Sir Anth.* Fire! Murder! where?

*David.* Oons! he's out of sight! and I'm out of breath, for my part! O, sir Anthony, why didn't you stop him? why didn't you stop him?

*Sir Anth.* Zounds! the fellow's mad! Stop whom? stop Jack?

*David.* Ay, the captain, sir!—there's murder and slaughter!

*Sir Anth.* Murder!

*David.* Ay, please you, sir Anthony, there's all kinds of murder, all sorts of slaughter, to be seen in the fields! There's fighting going on, sir—bloody sword and gun fighting!

*Sir Anth.* Who are going to fight, dunce?

*David.* Every body that I know of, sir Anthony! every body is going to fight my poor master; sir Lucius O'Trigger, your son, the captain!

*Sir Anth.* O, the dog! I see his tricks——Do you know the place?

*David.* King's Mead-fields.

*Sir Anth.* You know the way?

*David.* Not an inch; but I'll call the mayor, aldermen, constables, church-wardens, and beadles—we can't be too many to part them!

*Sir Anth.* Come along; give me your shoulder—we'll get assistance as we go—The lying villain! Well, I shall be in such a frenzy!—So, this was the history of his trinkets! I'll bauble him! [*Exeunt.*

## SCENE III.—*King's Mead-fields.*

SIR LUCIUS *and* ACRES, *with pistols.*

*Acres.* By my valour, then, sir Lucius, forty yards is a good distance!—Odds levels and aims! I say it is a good distance.

*Sir Luc.* Is it for muskets or small field-pieces? Upon my conscience, Mr Acres, you must leave those things to me. Stay now, I'll show you: [*Measures paces along the stage.*] There, now, that is a very pretty distance—a pretty gentleman's distance.

*Acres.* Zounds! we might as well fight in a sentry-box! I tell you, sir Lucius, the farther he is off, the cooler I shall take my aim.

*Sir Luc.* Faith! then I suppose you would aim at him best of all, if he was out of sight!

*Acres.* No, sir Lucius: but I should think forty, or eight-and-thirty yards———

*Sir Luc.* Pho, pho! nonsense! three or four feet between the mouths of your pistols is as good as a mile!

*Acres.* Odds bullets, no! By my valour, there is no merit in killing him so near! do, my dear sir Lucius, let me bring him down at a long shot—a long shot, sir Lucius, if you love me!

*Sir Luc.* Well; the gentleman's friend and I must settle that. But tell me, now, Mr Acres, in case of an accident, is there any little will or commission I could execute for you?

*Acres.* I am much obliged to you, sir Lucius; but I don't understand———

*Sir Luc.* Why, you may think there's no being shot at without a little risk; and, if an unlucky bullet should carry a quietus with it—I say, it will be no time then to be bothering you about family matters.

*Acres.* A quietus!

*Sir Luc.* For instance, now—if that should be the case, would you choose to be pickled and sent home? or would it be the same to you to lie here in the abbey?—I'm told there is very snug lying in the abbey.

*Acres.* Pickled!—Snug lying in the Abbey!—Odds tremors! sir Lucius, don't talk so!

*Sir Luc.* I suppose, Mr Acres, you never were engaged in an affair of this kind before?

*Acres.* No, sir Lucius, never before.

*Sir Luc.* Ah, that's a pity! there's nothing like being used to a thing.——Pray, now, how would you receive the gentleman's shot?

*Acres.* Odds files! I've practised that—There, sir Lucius, there [*Puts himself in an attitude.*]—a side front, hey?——Odd! I'll make myself small enough—I'll stand edge-ways.

*Sir Luc.* Now, you're quite out; for if you stand so when I take my aim—[*Levelling at him.*]

*Acres.* Zounds! sir Lucius—are you sure it is not cocked?

*Sir Luc.* Never fear.

*Acres.* But—but—you don't know—it may go off of its own head!

*Sir Luc.* Pho! be easy—Well, now, if I hit you in the body, my bullet has a double chance—for if it misses a vital part of your right side, 'twill be very hard if it don't succeed on the left!

*Acres.* A vital part!

*Sir Luc.* But, there—fix yourself so—[*Placing him.*] let him see the broad-side of your full front—there—now, a ball or two may pass clean through your body, and never do any harm at all!

*Acres.* Clean through me!—a ball or two clean through me!

*Sir Luc.* Ay may they—and it is much the genteelest attitude into the bargain.

*Acres.* Look'e! sir Lucius——I'd just as lieve be shot in an aukward posture as a genteel one—So, by my valour! I will stand edge-ways.

*Sir Luc.* [*Looking at his watch.*] Sure they don't mean to disappoint us—Hah!—no faith—I think I see them coming.

*Acres.* Hey!—what!—coming!

*Sir Luc.* Ay—Who are those yonder getting over the stile?

*Acres.* There are two of them, indeed!——well, let them come—hey, sir Lucius?—we—we—we—we—won't run.———

*Sir Luc.* Run!

*Acres.* No—I say—we won't run, by my valour!

*Sir Luc.* What the devil's the matter with you?

*Acres.* Nothing—nothing—my dear friend—my dear sir Lucius—but I-I-I don't feel quite so bold, somehow—as I did.

*Sir Luc.* O fie! consider your honour.

*Acres.* Ay—true—my honour!—Do, sir Lucius, edge in a word or two, every now and then, about my honour.

*Sir Luc.* Well, here they're coming. [*Looking.*

*Acres.* Sir Lucius—if I was not with you, I should almost think I was afraid—if my valour should leave me!—Valour will come and go.

*Sir Luc.* Then, pray keep it fast, while you have it.

*Acres.* Sir Lucius, I doubt it is going—yes—my valour is certainly going!—it is sneaking off! I feel it oozing out, as it were, at the palms of my hands!

*Sir Luc.* Your honour—your honour!—Here they are!

*Acres.* O mercy!——now that I was safe at Clod-Hall! or could be shot before I was aware!

*Enter* FAULKLAND *and* ABSOLUTE.

*Sir Luc.* Gentlemen, your most obedient.——Ha! what, captain Absolute!—So, I suppose, sir, you are come here just like myself—to do a kind office, first for your friend, then to proceed to business on your own account?

*Acres.* What, Jack!—my dear Jack!—my dear friend!

*Abs.* Heark'e, Bob, Beverley's at hand.

*Sir Luc.* Well, Mr Acres, I don't blame your saluting the gentleman civilly.—So, Mr Beverley, [*To* FAULKLAND.] if you'll choose weapons, the captain and I will measure the ground.

*Faulk.* My weapons, sir!

*Acres.* Odds life! sir Lucius, I'm not going to fight Mr Faulkland—These are my particular friends.

*Sir Luc.* What, sir, did not you come here to fight Mr Acres?

*Faulk.* Not I, upon my word, sir!

*Sir Luc.* Well, now, that's mighty provoking! But I hope, Mr Faulkland, as there are three of us come on purpose for the game, you won't be so cantanckerous as to spoil the party by sitting out?

*Abs.* O pray, Faulkland, fight to oblige sir Lucius.

*Faulk.* Nay, if Mr Acres is so bent on the matter———

*Acres.* No, no, Mr Faulkland—I'll bear my disappointment like a Christian. Look'e, sir Lucius, there's no occasion at all for me to fight; and, if it is the same to you, I'd as lieve let it alone.

*Sir Luc.* Observe me, Mr Acres, I must not be trifled with. You have certainly challenged somebody—and you came here to fight him—Now, if that gentleman is willing to represent him, I can't see for my soul, why it is not just the same thing.

*Acres.* Why, no—sir Lucius—I tell you 'tis one Beverley I've challenged—a fellow, you see, that dare not show his face! If he were here, I'd make him give up his pretensions directly!

*Abs.* Hold, Bob—let me set you right.—There is no such man as Beverley in the case. The person who assumed that name is before you; and, as his pretensions are the same in both characters, he is ready to support them in whatever way you please.

*Sir Luc.* Well, this is lucky.—Now you have an opportunity———

*Acres.* What! quarrel with my dear friend Jack Absolute—not if he were fifty Beverley's! Zounds! sir Lucius, you would not have me so unnatural.

*Sir Luc.* Upon my conscience, Mr Acres, your valour has oozed away with a vengeance!

*Acres.* Not in the least! Odds backs and abettors! I'll be your second with all my heart—and, if you should get a quietus, you may command me entirely. I'll get you snug lying in the abbey here; or pickle you, and send you over to Blunderbuss-hall, or any thing of the kind, with the greatest pleasure.

*Sir Luc.* Pho, pho! you are little better than a coward.

*Acres.* Mind, gentlemen, he calls me a coward! Coward was the word, by my valour!

*Sir Luc.* Well, sir?

*Acres.* Look'e, sir Lucius, 'tis not that I mind the word coward—coward may be said in joke—But if you had called me a poltroon, odds daggers and balls——

*Sir Luc.* Well, sir?

*Acres.* I should have thought you a very ill-bred man.

*Sir Luc.* Pho! you are beneath my notice.

*Abs.* Nay, sir Lucius, you can't have a better second than my friend Acres—He is a most determined dog—called in the country, Fighting Bob.—He generally kills a man a week! Don't you, Bob?

*Acres.* Ay; at home!

*Sir Luc.* Well, then, captain, 'tis we must begin—so come out, my little counsellor [*Draws his sword.*], and ask the gentleman, whether he will resign the lady, without forcing you to proceed against him?

*Abs.* Come on, then, sir [*Draws.*]; since you won't let it be an amicable suit, here's my reply!

*Enter* SIR ANTHONY, DAVID, *and the Women.*

*David.* Knock them all down, sweet sir Anthony—knock down my master in particular—and bind his hands over to their good behaviour!

*Sir Anth.* Put up, Jack, put up, or I shall be in a phrenzy—How came you in a duel, sir?

*Abs.* Faith, sir, that gentleman can tell you better than I! 'twas he called on me; and, you know, sir, I serve his majesty.

*Sir Anth.* Here's a pretty fellow! I catch him going to cut a man's throat, and he tells me, he serves his majesty!—Zounds! sirrah, then how durst you draw the king's sword against one of his subjects?

*Abs.* Sir, I tell you! That gentleman called me out, without explaining his reasons.

*Sir Anth.* Gad, Sir! how came you to call my son out, without explaining your reasons?

*Sir Luc.* Your son, sir, insulted me in a manner which my honour could not brook.

*Sir Anth.* Zounds! Jack, how durst you insult the gentleman in a manner which his honour could not brook?

*Mrs Mal.* Come, come, let's have no honour before ladies; Captain Absolute, come here—How could you intimidate us so? Here's Lydia has been terrified to death for you.

*Abs.* For fear I should be killed, or escape, madam?

*Mrs Mal.* Nay, no delusions to the past—Lydia is convinced; speak, child.

*Sir Luc.* With your leave, madam, I must put in a word here; I believe I could interpret the young lady's silence—Now mark—

*Lydia.* What is it you mean, sir?

*Sir Luc.* Come, come, Delia, we must be serious now; this is no time for trifling.

*Lydia.* 'Tis true, sir; and your reproof bids me offer this gentleman my hand, and solicit the return of his affections.

*Abs.* O! my little angel, say you so?—Sir Lucius, I perceive there must be some mistake here—with regard to the affront which you affirm I have given you. I can only say, that it could not have been intentional.—And as you must be convinced, that I should not fear to support a real injury—you shall now see that I am not ashamed to atone for an inadvertency—I ask your pardon.—But for this lady, while honoured with her approbation, I will support my claim against any man whatever.

*Sir Anth.* Well said, Jack, and I'll stand by you, my boy!

*Acres.* Mind, I give up all my claim—I make no pretensions to any thing in the world—and if I can't get a wife, without fighting for her, by my valour, I'll live a bachelor.

*Sir Luc.* Captain, give me your hand—an affront handsomely acknowledged becomes an obligation—and as for the lady—if she chooses to deny her own hand-writing here——

[*Takes out letters.*

*Mrs Mal.* O, he will dissolve my mystery!—Sir Lucius, perhaps there's some mistake—perhaps I can illuminate———

*Sir Luc.* Pray, old gentlewoman, don't interfere where you have no business.—Miss Languish, are you my Delia, or not?

*Lydia.* Indeed, sir Lucius, I am not.

[LYDIA *and* ABSOLUTE *walk aside.*

*Mrs Mal.* Sir Lucius O'Trigger—ungrateful as you are—I own the soft impeachment—pardon my blushes, I am Delia!

*Sir Luc.* You Delia—pho! pho! be easy!

*Mrs Mal.* Why, thou barbarous Vandyke—those letters are mine—When you are more sensible of my benignity—perhaps I may be brought to encourage your addresses.

*Sir Luc.* Mrs Malaprop, I am extremely sensible of your condescension; and whether you or Lucy have put this trick upon me, I am equally beholden to you.—And, to shew you I am not ungrateful, captain Absolute, since you have taken that lady from me, I'll give you my Delia into the bargain.

*Abs.* I am much obliged to you, sir Lucius; but here's my friend, Fighting Bob, unprovided for.

*Sir Luc.* Hah! little Valour—here, will you make your fortune?

*Acres.* Odds wrinkles! No.—But give me your hand, sir Lucius; forget and forgive; but if ever I give you a chance of pickling me again, say Bob Acres is a dunce, that's all.

*Sir Anth.* Come, Mrs Malaprop, don't be cast down—you are in your bloom yet.

*Mrs Mal.* O sir Anthony!—men are all barbarians———

[*All retire but* JULIA *and* FAULKLAND.

*Julia.* He seems dejected and unhappy—not sullen—there was some foundation, however, for the tale he told me—O woman! how true should be your judgment, when your resolution is so weak!

*Faulk.* Julia!—how can I sue for what I so little deserve? I dare not presume—yet Hope is the child of Penitence.

*Julia.* Oh! Faulkland, you have not been more faulty in your unkind treatment of me, than I am now in wanting inclination to resent it. As my heart honestly bids me place my weakness to the account of love, I should be ungenerous not to admit the same plea for your's.

*Faulk.* Now I shall be blest indeed!———

[SIR ANTHONY *comes forward.*

*Sir Anth.* What's going on here?—So you have been quarrelling too, I warrant.——Come, Julia, I never interfered before; but let me have a hand in the matter at last.—All the faults I have ever seen in my friend Faulkland, seemed to proceed from what he calls the delicacy and warmth of his affection for you——There, marry him directly, Julia; you'll find he'll mend surprisingly! [*The rest come forward.*

*Sir Luc.* Come now, I hope there is no dissatisfied person, but what is content; for as I have been disappointed myself, it will be very hard if I have not the satisfaction of seeing other people succeed better———

*Acres.* You are right, sir Lucius.—So, Jack, I wish you joy—Mr Faulkland, the same.—Ladies,—come now, to shew you I'm neither vexed nor angry, odds Tabors and Pipes! I'll order the fiddles in half an hour, to the New Rooms——and I insist on your all meeting me there.

*Sir Anth.* Gad! Sir, I like your spirit; and at night we single lads will drink a health to the young couples, and a husband to Mrs Malaprop.

*Faulk.* Our partners are stolen from us, Jack—I hope to be congratulated by each other—yours for having checked in time, the errors of an ill-directed imagination, which might have betrayed an innocent heart; and mine, for having, by her gentleness and candour, reformed the unhappy temper of one, who, by it, made wretched whom he loved most, and tortured the heart he ought to have adored.

*Abs.* Well, Jack, we have both tasted the bitters, as well as the sweets, of love—with this difference only, that you always prepared the bitter cup for yourself, while I———

*Lydia.* Was always obliged to me for it! hey, Mr Modesty?—But come, no more of that—our happiness is now as unallayed as general.

*Julia.* Then let us study to preserve it so: and while Hope pictures to us a flattering scene of future bliss, let us deny its pencil those colours which are too bright to be lasting.—When hearts deserving happiness would unite their fortunes, Virtue would crown them with an unfading garland of modest hurtless flowers; but ill-judging Passion will force the gaudier rose into the wreath, whose thorn offends them, when its leaves are dropt! [*Exeunt omnes.*

# THE

# CHOLERIC MAN.

BY

*CUMBERLAND.*

## DRAMATIS PERSONÆ.

### MEN.

ANDREW NIGHTSHADE, *the choleric man.*
MANLOVE, *half brother to* NIGHTSHADE.
STAPLETON, *a merchant.*
CHARLES MANLOVE, NIGHTSHADE'S *eldest son.*
JACK NIGHTSHADE, *his brother.*
DIBBLE, *a coxcomb.*
GREGORY, *servant to* ANDREW NIGHTSHADE.
FRAMPTON, *clerk to* MANLOVE.
FREDERICK, *servant to* CHARLES MANLOVE.

### WOMEN.

MRS STAPLETON, *wife to* STAPLETON.
LÆTITIA, *niece to* STAPLETON.
LUCY, *sister to* DIBBLE.

*Scene—London.*

## ACT I.

### SCENE I.—MANLOVE'S *Chambers.*

FRAMPTON *at his desk.*

*Enter* MANLOVE *as from his walk*—FRAMPTON *rises, and meets him with some papers.*

*Framp.* You have lengthened your walk this morning?

*Man.* Very likely: The gardens were pleasant, and I believe I have rather exceeded my usual stint.

*Framp.* By just one turn upon the Terrace.

*Man.* You measured me, I see. We men of business, Frampton, contract strange habits of regularity.

*Framp.* And bachelors too, sir.

*Man.* Very true, very true: A wife now and then does put a man a little out of method, I have heard. Is any body waiting?

*Framp.* No body.

*Man.* Any cases?

*Framp.* Several. [*Gives him papers.*

*Man.* Bless me! was the world of my mind, they would patch up their differences over a bottle, and let the grass grow in our inns of court. Let me see—what have we got here? [*Reads.*] 'A detects B plucking turnips out of his field,' &c Here's a fellow for you! he'll go to law with the crows for picking worms out of his dunghill: Prosecute a fellow-creature for a turnip!—— A turnip be his damages!

*Framp.* And his food, too—at least till he's a better man.

*Man.* [*Reading.*] 'Nicholas Swanskin, taylor, in Threadneedle-street, would be glad to know how to proceed in a legal way against his wife, in a case of cohabitancy.'—Had you any fee with this case?

*Framp.* A light guinea, sir.

*Man.* 'Tis more than a light woman deserves: Give the taylor his guinea again; bid him proceed to his work, and leave a good-for-nothing wife to go on with hers—and hark'e, Frampton, you seem to want a new coat—suppose you let him take your measure—the fellow, you see, would fain be cutting out work for the lawyers. Send Mr Dibble hither. Oh, he is come.

[FRAMPTON *retires to his desk.*

*Enter* DIBBLE, *with papers.*

Mr Dibble, have you got Miss Fairfax's papers?

*Dib.* They are in my hand, sir.

*Man.* Have you copied my opinion upon the will?

*Dib.* It is ready for signing.

[DIB. *gives him a pen, and* MAN. *signs a paper.*]

*Man.* There, sir. You've compared it, no doubt—Put the papers under one inclosure, and carry them to Miss Fairfax's; make my respects, and say I will have the honour of waiting on her this forenoon, and stating some particulars in my opinion that may want explaining.

*Dib.* I shall, sir.

[*Goes to the table, and puts up the papers.*

*Man.* Are you ready, Frampton? You and I must step to the hall, How we appear to that spruce gentleman! His father wore a livery—his sister is waiting-woman to Miss Fairfax, the very lady he is going to in that monkey habit! Is there no persuading him to suit his dress to his condition? Believe me, Frampton, there is much good sense in old distinctions: When the law lays down its full-bottomed periwig, you will find less wisdom in bald pates than you are aware of.

[*Exeunt* MAN. *and* FRAM.

*Dib.* What a damned queer figure old Frampton makes of himself! I must never shew him at our Sunday's club—never. The counsellor's little better: It does well enough for chamber practice, but he couldn't walk the hall in that wig: Its nothing now unless a good club of hair peeps under the tye. I hope shortly to see the day when Westminster-hall shall be able to count cues with the parade. [*He sits down. A knocking at the door.*] Who's at the door? Come in—You expect now I should rise and open it? not I, in faith; do that office for yourself, or stay where you are. Ah, Gregory, is it you? what wind blew you hither? what witch brought you at her back?

*Enter* GREGORY.

*Gre.* No witch, but an old bone-setting mare, with a heavy cloak-bag at her crupper, that has played a bitter tune upon my ribs. Where's his honour, Master Dibble?

*Dib.* Out—Give me hold of thy hand, old boy. What's the best news in your parts? Hav'n't earthed old Surly-boots yet?

*Gre.* Earthed him! no such luck; he's a tough morsel. He's above ground, as my head can testify. [*Shews his skull.*

*Dib.* Why that's action and battery with a vengeance!

*Gre.* Battery! he knows the strength of my skull, as well as a sand-man knows the back of his ass, and cudgels it as often: but he's hard at hand—When will his honour, Manlove, be at home?

*Dib.* Presently, presently. What brings your old blade hither?

*Greg.* The old errand: a little bit of law; a small jig to the tune of John Doe and Richard Roe; that's all.

*Dib.* Plaintiff, I bet five to one. But how does my playmate, Jack? how fares it with young Hopeful?

*Gre.* Gad's-my-life, well remembered! here's a writing for you: 'tis a merciless scrawl, to be sure; he's not at all come on in his running-hand; not at all; no, though I talk to him, and talk to him, and tell him what a fine young man his brother Charles is here—Mr Manlove, I must call him now; for his honour, I am told, since his return from travel, has nominated him afresh after himself, has not he, Master Dibble?

*Dib.* Ay, ay; 'twas done last sessions; he's no longer Charles Nightshade, but Charles Manlove, Esq. and a brave estate he's got by the exchange.

*Gre.* All these things I ding into the ears of our young scape-grace, Jack; but, I might as well whistle the birds from the sky, as talk him out of his tricks; mobbing with the carter-fellows, and scampering after the maids: all the while, too, the arch knave contrives to blind the eyes of old Choleric, his father, sitting as demure as a cat, 'till he is fairly in for his evening's nap; then, away goes he, like hey-go-mad, all the parish over. Well, have you made out his letter?

*Dib.* I'll attempt to read it to you.

'Dear Pickle,

'Old Choleric is setting off for London, and 'thinks to leave me in the country, but it won't 'do: must have another brush with the lads at the 'Bear: intend to be at brother Charles's on Wed-'nesday at noon, where you'll meet me. Old 'Trusty carries this, and understands trap: mum's 'the word. Thine,

'JOHN NIGHTSHADE.'

So you are privy to this trip, Gregory?

*Gre.* To be sure, master Dibble; we are all of his side: there is not a servant would peach, if he was to commit murder amongst them.

*Dib.* Indeed! But hold, here is more over the leaf. 'Gregory says I was of age last Lammas; 'if you know of ever a clean tight wench, that 'will take me out of old Choleric's clutches, I 'don't care if I buckle to, for life. N. B. She 'must have the Spanish, or the bait won't take.'

So, so! he's for a wife, you see: has he ever talked to you in this strain?

*Gre.* Now and then; but I always tell him 'tis time to think of marrying when the old badger is in the earth.

*Dib.* Pooh! you're to blame: we'll make a man of him; we'll set him up with a wife. I have a girl in my eye! a friend of my own—provided you will bear a hand in the business.

*Gre.* Bear a hand, master Dibble! You are a lawyer and can take care of yourself; I'm a poor servant, and have a character to lose.

*Dib.* Well, well; but if I pay you for your character, and your service into the bargain—every thing has its price, you know.

*Gre.* To be sure, there's no denying that; but, hark! here comes his honour Manlove.

*Dib.* Enough—Where are you lodged?

*Gre.* At Mr Stapleton's, in New Broad-Street: I'm going thither after I've seen the counsellor.

*Dib.* Better and better still! I'm going thither, too, and will wait for you, below, in the square: we can discuss my scheme by the way.

[*Exit* DIB.

*Gre.* What a sharp bitten vermin it is! Ah! these lawyers have all their wits about them.

*Enter* MANLOVE.

*Man.* What, Gregory! and without thy master? Where's my brother Nightshade? Thou and he are seldom parted, I believe.

*Gre.* Troth, sir, I hope Heaven will take some consideration of that, and set off the sins of my youth against the suffering of my old age. The 'squire is at hand.

*Man.* Well, and what business calls him up to town?

*Gre.* Please your honour, he is fallen out with our parson.

*Man.* About tythes?

*Gre.* Lack-a-day! he has been non-suited upon that score over and over—'Tis about game.

*Man.* Game, quotha! if he comes to talk to me about hares and partridges, Gregory, I won't hear of it: such laws and such law-suits are the disgrace of the country—I wont hear a word upon the subject.

*Gre.* It's quite a breach; he has totally left off going to church himself, and forbade all his family; nay, what's more, he has broke his back-gammon tables, only because the parson taught him the game. Mercy o' me, that ever your honour and my old master should be born of the same mother!

*Man.* Of the same mother, but very different fathers, Gregory: doomed, from early youth, to a life merely mercantile, his days have been passed between a compting-house at Rotterdam, and the cabin of a Dutch dogger; precious universities! One son, indeed, he allowed me to rescue from his hands, and to him I have given a public education; the other poor lad has been a bird of his own breeding.

*Gre.* And a precious bird he is! such another lapwing! skitting here, and skitting there; sometimes above, sometimes below: no wonder he's so wild, when his schooling has been under the hedges; but, I hear my old master on the stairs. Good morning to your honour—I must budge onwards to Mr Stapleton's. [*Exit* GRE.

*Man.* Gregory, good morning!

*Enter* ANDREW NIGHTSHADE.

*A. Night.* [*Speaks, as he enters.*] I tell you, fellow, there's your fare: I'll not give you a farthing over. A hard shilling, indeed!—a hard coach, if you please!—Brother Manlove, your servant! This town grows worse and worse; no conscience, no police—if I was not the most patient man alive, such things would turn my brain—Brother Manlove, I say your servant!

*Man.* Brother Andrew, you are welcome. You seemed a little ruffled, so that I waited for its subsiding, and now, give me your hand: I am glad to see you in town, provided the occasion be agreeable.

*A. Night.* I think the law has a proviso for every thing: your compliment sets off, like the preamble of a statute, and your conclusion limps after, like the clause at the tail of it. So you keep your old apartments, and as slovenly as ever—Lincoln's-Inn and the law—so runs your life. A turn upon the terrace after breakfast, a mutton chop for dinner at the Rolls, and the evening paper at the Mount, wind up your day.

*Man.* A narrow scale, I own; but whether it be, that I was made too small for happiness, I never could entertain both guests together; so I took the humblest of the two, and left the other for my betters.

*A. Night.* Ay, 'tis too late to alter; 'twould be a vain endeavour to correct your temper at these years—By the way, brother, your stair-case is the dirtiest I ever set my foot upon.

*Man.* So long as we have clean dealings, within, our clients will make no complaint. Your's, I warrant, was neater at Rotterdam?

*A. Night.* Neater! 'tis a matter of astonishment to me, how you, that have a plentiful estate, can make yourself a slave to business, and drudge away your life in such a hole as this!

*Man.* True, Andrew, 'twas unreasonable; but, as I have now made over the best part of my estate to your son, so I think I have answered the best part of your objection.

*A. Night.* You shall excuse me—all the world cries out upon your folly; you are apt to be a little hasty, else I should be free to tell you, you have made yourself ridiculous; and what is worse—brother Charles, I speak to you as a father, you have undone my son.

*Man.* How so? have I confined him in his education?

*A. Night.* No, faith; the scale on which you have finished him is wide enough to take in vice and folly at full size: his principles won't cramp their growth. At school he was grounded in impudence, the university confirmed him in ignorance, and the grand tour stocked him with infidelity and bad pictures—such has been his education.

*Man.* But you, in your wisdom, pursued a different course with your younger son.

*A. Night.* I bred him as a rational creature should be bred, under the rod of discipline, under the lash of my own arm; I gave him a sober, frugal, godly training; and mark the difference between them—Your fellow lives here in this great city, in a round of pleasures, in the front of the fashion, squandering and revelling:—Mine abides patiently in the country, toiling and travailling; early at his duty, sparing at his meals, patient of fatigue; he hears no music as Charles does, purchases no fine pictures, lolls in no fine chariot, befools himself with no fine women: no, thank my stars, I've rescued one of my boys; Jack, at least, walks in the steps of his father.

*Man.* I hope he will; better principles I cannot wish him: but, methinks, Andrew, a little more knowledge of the world——

*A. Night.* Knowledge of the world, brother Charles! who knows so much? Belike you never heard, then, I had made three trips to Shetland, in a herring-buss, before you was born! have been three time chartered to Statia for muscovadoes; twice to Zante for currants; and made one voyage to Bencoolen for pepper?

*Man.* Yes; and that pepper-voyage runs in your blood still.

*A. Night.* So much the better; it will preserve my wits; it will season my understanding from such fly-blown folly as your's. Zooks! you to talk of knowledge of the world! where should you come by it? upon Clapham-Common! upon Bansted-Downs? Did you ever see the Pike of Teneriffe, the rock of Gibraltar, or even the bishop and his clerks? I know them all, your charts, and your coasting-pilots; I have been two nights and a day upon a sandbank in the Grecian Islands; and do you talk to me of knowledge of the world?

*Man.* Let us change the subject, then—you have not told me what brings you out of the country?

*A. Night.* Because there's no abiding in it; what with refractory tenants, poaching parsons, enclosing 'squires, navigation schemes, and turnpike meetings, there's no keeping peace about me; no, though I've commenced fourteen suits at law, besides bye-battles at quarter-sessions, courts leet, and courts baron, innumerable.

*Man.* Indeed!

*A. Night.* No sooner do I put my head out of doors, but instantly some fellow meets me with a fowling-piece on his shoulder, or a fishing-rod in his hand, or a grey-hound at his horse's heels, and all to disturb and destroy my property.

*Man.* I say property! let your game look after themselves. Do you call a creature property, that lights upon my lands to-day, upon your's to-morrow, and the next, perhaps, in Norway? I reprobate all quarrels about guns, and dogs, and game; for my part, I am pleased to see an Englishman with arms, whether he bears them for his own amusement, or for my defence.

*A. Night.* 'Tis mighty well! I am a fool to waste my time with you; I shall look after my own game, in my own way; you may watch your's, the sparrows, here, in the garden, or the old duck in the fountain in the square; your science goes no farther, so your servant. If you want me, I shall be found at Mr Stapleton's in New Broad-street.

*Man.* Hold, hold! I'm going there; I've business at Mr Stapleton's; my chariot's at the door—I'll carry you. Who waits?

*Enter Servant.*

Here, take this note to Mr Manlove.

*A. Night.* Ay, that's your puppy; my name was not good enough, it seems; but positively, I'll not see him; if you bring him to me 'tis all in vain; I positively will not bear him in my presence. [*Exit* A. NIGHT.

*Man.* That ever such a monster should exist, as an unnatural father! [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*An apartment in* CHARLES MANLOVE'S *house.*

*Enter* CHARLES MANLOVE, *and* FREDERICK.

*Cha. Man.* Mr Manlove dines with me to-day; lay two covers in the little parlour, and bid the cook be punctual to his hour.

*Fre.* To a minute, sir. If Mr Manlove dines here, dinner will be served precisely as the clock is striking.

*Cha. Man.* Set out the dumb waiter, and tell the men they need not attend.

*Fre.* [*Goes to the door and speaks.*] Sir, you cannot come in; my master is not to be spoken with: where are you pushing?

*Cha. Man.* What's the matter, Frederick?

*Fre.* A country-like fellow says he must be admitted to speak with you in private; he will not be kept out——

[*Pulls the door to, and enters.*

*Cha. Man.* And why should he?

*Fre.* I don't know; I cannot say I like his looks; I never saw a more suspicious person.

*Cha. Man.* Well, let him in, however.

[FRED. *opens the door.*

*Enter* JACK NIGHTSHADE.

*Fre.* He has the Tyburn marks about him. [*Aside.*

*Cha. Man.* Brother!

*Fre.* Gad so, I'm wrong! I'll e'en make off.
[*Exit* FRE.

*J. Night.* Hush, hush! don't blow me! snug's the word; close, close, and under the wind.

*Cha. Man.* I protest I scarce knew you, Jack; what brings you to town?

*J. Night.* Six hours, and as bright a gelding as ever was lapt in leather.

*Cha. Man.* But what's your business? did your father send you up?

*J. Night.* He send me up! where have you lived to ask the question? No; he has brought himself hither, and I stole a march after him: a freak; a frolick, that's all. Didlikins! what a flaming house you live in! Oh, I give you joy, brother! Uncle Manlove has clapt a new name upon you. Old Surly knows nothing of this trip. I had much ado to get to the speech of you: you have a mortal parcel of fine fellows below in your hall. But you are not angry at my coming? you'll not peach, I hope?

*Cha. Man.* Honour forbid! Thy lot, my dear boy, has been severe enough.

*J. Night.* Severe! there's been no scarcity of that, I warrant you: there's not a crab-stock in the neighbourhood, but what my shoulders have had a taste of its fruit. Oh, you've a rare lot, Charles! a happy rogue! Look at me—Who would think you and I were whelps of the same breed? You are as my lady's lap-dog; I am rough as a water-spaniel; be-daggled and be-mired, as if I had come out of the fens with wild fowl: why, I have brought off as much soil upon my boots only, as would set up a Norfolk farmer.

*Cha. Man.* Well, well, Jack; we'll soon get thee into better trim.

*J. Night.* Then you must thrust me into a case of your own, for I've no more coats than skins: father, to be sure, keeps it well dusted; but, methinks, I should be strangely glad to see myself a gentleman for one hour or two.

*Cha. Man.* What can I do for you? your father, you say, is in town; a discovery would be fatal: do you know where he is lodged?

*J. Night.* Not I, truly; but my amusements lead to places, where I should be sure not to meet him: only one night, dear Charles, and I'll be back again in the country; think what a life mine is; compare it with your own, and I am sure you won't grudge me one day's frolic and away!

*Cha. Man.* I grudge you! no—I wish you could enjoy a brother's share in all my happiness, in all my fortune: submit, however, to the necessity of your affairs with a good grace; humour the peculiarities of your father, and command me upon all worthy occasions.

*J. Night.* Why that's hearty, that's friendly now. Give me hold of your hand. Boddikins! I was afraid you would have turned your back on me, now you have jumped into such a fortune; but I see you are as honest a lad as ever: By the way, father was in a damned hue at your changing your name—fierce as a panther; no man dare enter his den. But you say you'll rig me out for a day; give me a good launch, Charles, and I warrant I'll find a harbour.

*Cha. Man.* There's my purse, Jack; it contains enough to spend, and some to throw away: Frederick commands the wardrobe; if you find any thing to your mind, take it; if not, convene my tailor; he'll equip you in an instant. Follow your propensities, but take a little discretion to your aid; your nature has not had much pruning; and, till experience shall have cleared the path of life, pleasure may be apt to spread some snares in your way, that may cost you sorrow to escape from.

*J. Night.* Humph! in all twenty and five guineas! What was you saying last, brother?

*Cha. Man.* Only throwing away a little good advice upon you, Jack; that's all.

*J. Night.* I thank you; I have a pretty considerable stock of that upon my hands already; one good thing at a time. [*Looking at the money.*] How much of this money must you take back again?

*Cha. Man.* 'Tis all at your service, and more, if your occasions require it.

*J. Night.* Are you serious! Is it possible!—'Sbud, I don't know, I can't tell what I should do in your case, but I am afraid I could never have the heart to give you as much. Drown it! what pity 'tis that old Crusty had not some of your spirit! May I spend it all, and won't you require an account of it?

*Cha. Man.* Not unless you choose to give it me.

*J. Night.* Give me a kiss, give me a kiss, my dear, dear brother! enjoy your good fortune and welcome; I perceive a man has not half so much envy in his heart, when his pocket's full of money. Come, I'll go change my dress.
[*Exeunt.*

## ACT II.

SCENE I.—STAPLETON'S *house.* MRS STAPLETON *and* LETITIA *at breakfast.*

*Enter* MR STAPLETON.

*Mr Stap.* A MERCHANT'S wife, and not breakfasted before this! fye upon you, Dolly! these are new fashions, these are courtly customs; let us stick to the city, and the old city hours. And this idle jade, Letitia, loves her pillow better than she does her prayers. Come, come, away with your crockery. Old Andrew Nightshade will be with you before you are aware.

*Mrs Stap.* There is another room ready for his reception. I am afraid my dear husband will find this old man's peevishness more than even his good nature can put up with.

*Mr Stap.* Why have not you kept my patience then in better exercise? but never fear. Letitia, you are to have a visit from Counsellor Manlove this morning: Have you perused the papers he sent you?

*Let.* I have.

*Mr Stap.* And what do they tell you?

*Let.* What I can truly testify, that Mr Stapleton has been the best of guardians.

*Mr Stap.* I say the best! half the trading world would call me a very bad one; when you come to sum up the accounts of your education, hussy, I expect you will file a bill against me for waste and embezzlement.

*Let.* For misapplication, perhaps; the only objectionable part of your accounts will be the subject of them.

*Mr Stap.* For shame, Letitia Fairfax! you well know you have been the pride and pleasure of our lives.

*Mrs Stap.* When she was my ward, she dared not make so free with herself; now she is her own mistress, she must do as she will: My authority is expired.

*Let.* Rather revived in so much fuller force, by how much more I'm bound to you by love than law.

*Enter a Servant.*

*Ser.* Mr Nightshade is below, sir: Counsellor Manlove to wait upon Miss Fairfax.

*Let.* Where have you shown him?

*Ser.* He is in the drawing-room.

*Let.* I'll wait on him directly.

[*Exit Servant.*

*Mr Stap.* A word before we part. Mr Manlove will inform you of certain restrictions you are under, by your good father's will, in the article of marriage: If the subject should lead him, as possibly it may, to name his nephew Charles to you, in truth, my dear Letitia, I do not know, in all this town, a young man of whom report speaks so advantageously.

*Let.* Mr Manlove's business with me is of a very different sort.

*Mr Stap.* Perhaps not; therefore remember what I say.

*Let.* I never can forget the respect that is due to your opinion. [*Exit.*

*Mrs Stap.* Have you any reason to think Mr Manlove means to propose for his nephew?

*Mr Stap.* I'll tell you more of that hereafter; we must now welcome old Nightshade with as good a grace as we can. He is an honest man, though a humourous one, and was, for many years, a very steady correspondent of mine at Rotterdam. We merchants must not overlook our friends, whatever our betters may think fit to do. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—CHARLES MANLOVE'S *house.*

*Enter* JACK NIGHTSHADE, *finely appurelled, followed by* DIBBLE.

*J. Night.* Come along, Dibble, come along.—Dear, lovely, and delicious lady Fortune, who has put clothes upon my back, and cash into my pocket! thou knowest I never slandered thee, never called thee jilt or gipsey, when I've seen thee perched upon thy wheel, and feeding thy fools by handfuls; give me now the rest of thy blessing, love, pleasure, and good fellowship! May the lads I am to meet be frolicksome, and lasses free! and never let my poor little defenceless wherry come athwart that old Dutch dogger, my father, till 'tis safe in harbour, and all hands ashore.

*Dib.* Well said, squire! where, in the name of wonder, did you find this rhapsody?

*J. Night.* Why, did you never see the picture of Fortune, mounted on a wheel, with a bandage over her eyes, tossing money to the mob, like a parliament man? Gregory has the print in his pantry———you may buy the whole moral for a penny.

*Dib.* I protest, Jack, you are not only grown a beau in your brother's fine clothes, but a wit into the bargain.

*J. Night.* Pshaw! I am merry enough when my belly's full, and father asleep; but what signifies a poor fellow's being witty, when there is nobody to laugh at his jokes? 'Tis the money in my pocket, Dibble, not the clothes on my back, that makes me a wit; and when the wine mounts into my noddle, I shall be wittier still.

*Dib.* Time will shew. But, hark'e, 'squire Jack, before you pass yourself off for a man of fashion, should not you practise the carriage and conceits of one?

*J. Night.* I shall be glad to learn.

*Dib.* Be ruled by me; I will give you a few lessons shall set you up for a fine gentleman in a

minute. Look at me—that's well: Stare me full in the face—ay, that will do—you have impudence enough for the character—that's a main point gained: Now walk across the room.

*J. Night.* Walk! why that's easy enough, I hope.

*Dib.* Hold—not so fast; there you are out: walk, trippingly, thus, d'ye see, with a lazy loitering air, not a league at a stride, with your head playing like the pole of a coach, so. [*Mimicking.*] When you enter a room, take no notice of any body in it; make your way strait to the chimney; turn your back to the fire; pull away the flaps of your clothes, and display your person to the ladies, who are sitting round. When their teeth begin to chatter with the cold, throw yourself carelessly into a chair, tuck your hands into your muff, and never open your lips for the rest of the afternoon; 'twill gain respect in every house you enter.

*J. Night.* Well, well, Dibble; this is all easy enough: I shall be most at a loss for the lingo—what would your worship have me say when I'm amongst my betters?

*Dib.* Nothing, I tell you.

*J. Night.* Nothing! how the deuce, then, shall I shew my wit?

*Dib.* By holding your tongue: never speak yourself, nor smile at any thing spoken by another; reserve your wit for your creditors, they'll keep it in exercise: not but what there are other occasions for a man of fashion to shew his parts; as, for instance, with a woman of modesty you may be witty at the expence of her blushes; or, with a parson at the expence of his profession: These are cheap methods—be at no pains in the account; decency and religion will pay all costs, and you'll be clear of the courts.

*J. Night.* You need not tell me that; why, I played a thousand tricks upon our vicar, and, as for modest women, as you call them, I don't know much of them; but I know my tongue runs fast enough when I am amongst the maids; I can set the whole kitchen in a roar—But come, let us sally: Now do you mind. Dibble, don't you be calling squire, and squire Jack, and Jack Nightshade; but let it be sir, and your honour, and all that.

*Dib.* Trust to me for setting you off in those fine clothes—let me see——what shall we say you are?

*J. Night.* Say I'm a young West Indian just come from my canes.

*Dib.* Ay, or a young nobleman just succeeded to your honours; 'twill account for your want of education.

*J. Night.* No, hang it, a better thought strikes me; call me Mr Manlove.

*Dib.* Mr Manlove! Why do you take your brother's name?

*J. Night.* For the same reason that I take his clothes—because it fits me: If I leave him the estate that came with it, why mayn't I change names as well as he?

*Dib.* Because he changed by act of parliament, and you by act of your own.

*J. Night.* Act of parliament! Egad, they'll change people's sexes, by-and-by; why, they'll turn a wife into a maid by act of parliament, as readily as a common into an inclosure.

*Dib.* Yes; but it generally remains common for the life of the proprietor.

*J. Night.* Nan! How must I carry my hat, Dibble? Thus; under my arm? This damned barber has thrust his black skewers through my ears. Look out, and tell me if the man has called a coach.

*Dib.* 'Tis waiting, sir.

*J. Night.* A plague upon this spit! 'Tis as heavy as a fowling-pouch, and jingles like a pair of dog-couples; an oak-stick is worth two of it. Have you cautioned the servants about my name?

*Dib.* 'Tis done, your honour.

*J. Night.* 'Tis done, your honour; your honour is obeyed: come along, Dibble; let your honour go before, and law follow after.

*Dib.* Ay; but when law is at your heels, have a care it does not overtake you. [*Exeunt.*

### SCENE III.—*An apartment.*

*Enter* MANLOVE *and* CHARLES.

*Man.* Her mother was a Sedley, of a respectable family, and an accomplished lady; her father was a trader of fair character and principal, in the house now conducted with such credit by her guardian, Stapleton; her fortune is considerable. I mention that to you, as I think any great disproportion on either side, in that particular, is to be avoided.

*Cha. Man.* Equal alliances, to be sure, are best.

*Man.* And this would be of all most equal, for I verily think you have not a virtue, of which Miss Fairfax does not possess the counterpart: By the way, Charles, you will not like her the worse for being no inconsiderable proficient in your favourite art, painting.

*Cha. Man.* I have heard her performance very highly commended: your report makes me ambitious of being known to her; and so, my dear sir, I promise you, in the words of your favourite poet,

'I'll look to like, if looking liking move.

I'll take my heart to counsel, for I know you ask no sacrifice.

*Man.* No, Charles; 'twas to make you free, not to rob you of your freedom, that I gave you a fortune. If I throw your inclination into fetters, 'twill be poor satisfaction that I gilt them over afterwards.

*Cha. Man.* In that assurance, I will proceed

in this affair after my own humour; for as I wish to have an opportunity of seeing this fair paintress in her natural colours, I must devise some method of conversing with her at my ease.

*Man.* At your ease? What prevents you?

*Cha. Man.* The declaration you made to her this morning. I dread the artificial graces which young women are too apt to put on, when they act under observation; so quiet, so chastised, so infinitely obliging: we think them meek as lambs; marry them, and they change to mountain cats. Such women remind me of decayed ships newly painted; the outside is inviting; embark, and they conduct you to the grave.

*Man.* Well, Charles, if you embark your hopes upon this venture, I think I may insure you happiness, though the voyage is for life.

*Cha. Man.* Where can I find a better policy? However, if I could meet her without her knowing me—in the way of her art, now—can you tell me, is she visited by our best masters?

*Man.* By all foreigners, as well as natives; there is no fame without her approbation; not a grace is stampt without her fiat.

*Cha. Man.* Under favour, are not these extraordinary accomplishments to acquire in the family of a trader?

*Man.* Not at all; beware how you apply French ideas to English merchants: Where nature bestows genius, education will give accomplishments; but where the disposition is wanting, the blood of a duchess cannot make a gentlewoman.

*Cha. Man.* Was she ever out of England?

*Man.* I have been told she was near two years in Italy with a family of distinction.

*Cha. Man.* It is enough; I have my cue: I think I shall fall upon a method of introducing myself to her acquaintance without a discovery. I can pass examination in the art of painting very tolerably.

*Man.* Take your own course; I have no right to advise; I am poor authority in affairs of love. Good afternoon to you! Nay, Charles, no ceremony; I thought we had agreed upon that. Your servant. [*Exit* MAN.

*Cha. Man.* Your most obedient——Here, who waits?

*Enter* FREDERICK.

Frederick, look out my travelling frock——you know which I mean?

*Fred.* The suit you had made at Lyons?

*Cha. Man.* No; 'twas at Milan: the green camblet: bring it to me in the dressing-room.—Make haste. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*An apartment.*

*Enter* MR ANDREW NIGHTSHADE, *followed by* FRAMPTON.

*A. Night.* Come along, Mr What's-your-name: Enter without more ceremony, I beseech you—An old formal blockhead!

*Framp.* I attend you, sir, by order of Mr Manlove, touching a case wherein you have consulted him.

*A. Night.* That's true, that's true; it is the pigeon-house case—I gave it him this morning: Is it usual for you lawyers to be so nimble with your answers?

*Framp.* It is not unusual with Mr Manlove.

*A. Night.* Well, and what thinks he of the case?

*Framp.* The case is a clear case.

*A. Night.* I am glad to hear it heartily.

*Framp.* In other words, it is a case clear to be apprehended: it hath reference to a pigeon-house, built and erected in a certain field, commonly known by the name of the Vicar's Homeshade. '*Quære:* Standeth not the said pigeon-'house within the manorial rights of Calves Town, 'and in that case may not you, Andrew Night-'shade, esq. lord of said manor, remove, or cause 'to be removed, said vicar's pigeon-house?'

*A. Night.* Pull down, erase, destroy, and level with the ground! these are my words. Now, give me the opinion.

*Framp.* He has given no opinion.

*A. Night.* No opinion! What the plague, is this your errand? Am I to be made a fool of?

*Framp.* To his clients, Mr Manlove gives opinions; to his friends, advice. He wishes you to let the pigeon-house stand where it does.

*A. Night.* A fig for what he wishes.

*Framp.* However, if you're so determined, he does not deny but you may pull it down.

*A. Night.* Why, that's enough. Then down it goes: I'll sow the land with salt.

*Framp.* Nevertheless, he wills me to tell you, that this must be done *tuo periculo*, as the saying is; for, if your conscience does not prevent you from pulling it down, the law will make you build it up again.

*A. Night.* The law has made a fool of you, methinks. Why, what the deuce, do you blow hot and cold in the same breath? Is this the way you treat your clients! Am I to be fobbed off thus by an old methodical piece of clock-work, by a stiff starcht limb of the law, a cutter of goose quills, and a scraper of parchments? No: evacuate my chamber. Tell your principal, I'll none of his advice: I value his opinion not a rush: Shall I be taught and tutored at these years? I'm sure I'm an older man, and, I believe, a wiser than himself—so tell him, master Frampton.

*Framp.* Have you no other commands for me than these?

*A. Night.* Pooh!

*Framp.* I am your obedient—Good evening to your honour. [*Exit* FRAMP.

*A. Night.* Now, why the devil won't that fel-

low be in a passion? He'll no more be put out of temper, than a German postillion will out of his pace—So, Gregory! What news? Have you found out the attorney?

*Enter* GREGORY.

*Greg.* Your honour shall hear the whole proceeding: At Thaves Inn I first got sight of him, threw off, and took the drag as far as Shoe-lane; there he hung cover. I had a warm burst to the fleet; hunted him through Turn-again-lane, to the Old Bailey; got an entapis, and run into him in Labour-in-vain-Court, Old Fish-street-Hill—

*A. Night.* Well; and what says he to the prosecution?

*Greg.* For some time he said nothing; for, when I first arrived, he was on a visit to a friend under sentence of death in Newgate: however, after a while he came home, and then———

*A. Night.* What said he then? To the point, dunce.

*Greg.* Why, he said, an please your honour, he would have nothing to do with the business: There's no credit to be got by such prosecutions; if it had been on a criminal indictment, indeed—but he won't be concerned in any vexatious suit about the game; humanity won't suffer him.

*A. Night.* Humanity indeed! Was ever the like heard? But, sirrah, this is all a lie of your own inventing, and your bones shall answer for it. [*Threatening to cane him.*

*Enter* STAPLETON.

*Stap.* Keep the peace, in the king's name! What's the matter now, friend Andrew?

*A. Night.* Why, this sot would fain have me believe that a Newgate solicitor will refuse a suit upon motives of humanity: a likely tale indeed! He comes home from the society of a condemned malefactor, and scruples levying the penalty against a poaching parson. What would the noblemen and gentlemen, associated for the preservation of our game, say to that?

*Stap.* Who cares what they would say? What have men of business to do with such disputes?

*A. Night.* Men of business! I have no business: I left off trade, thank Heaven, in time: You'll stay till it has left you.

*Stap.* Why so? Our warehouses are as full, our commissions as many, our credit as good as ever: what do you see about us makes you prophecy so ill?

*A. Night.* I tell you, sir, your trade is ebbing fast away in every quarter of the globe. Look out and satisfy yourself; but I have done, 'tis no concern of mine—What are your treaties with the Portugueze? Waste paper; linings for old trunks to carry home refuse goods, that they return upon your hands. Another man would flatter you; but I'm your friend; I let you know these things in time.

*Stap.* A most considerate precaution, truly!

*A. Night.* I have now no leisure for conversations of this nature; but I would ask a thinking man, what must be the fate of our Turkey trade? Undone. You've burnt their ships, it seems; now you may burn your own; you'll have no further call for them, unless you send them to your colonies, to air your goods and exercise your sailors; but I've something else to think of. Your servant, Mr Stapleton—remember I've told you now, I've let you know your danger.

*Stap.* And in the tenderest manner; you are the kindest friend! If we are ruined, you'll have nothing to regret. Your servant; we shall meet again at supper.

*A. Night.* I just stept back to tell you that your weavers are all rising: I fell in with a large party of them in the streets: your people migrating by thousands: What! Men must not starve. I hint this to you gently, and in pure good will; I have no interest to serve—and so your servant for an hour or two—I'll tell you more when I return. Oh, if I was a man to turn the gloomy side of things upon you, I could draw a melancholy picture, truly!

[*Exit* A. NIGHT.

*Stap.* The man who tells me a distasteful lie, in some sort may be said to recommend the truth; but he who, like old Nightshade, makes the truth offensive, recommends a lie. [*Exit.*

SCENE V.—*An apartment.*

*Enter* LETITIA *and* LUCY.

*Let.* Lucy, come hither; you have a brother, I think, who is one of counsellor Manlove's clerks?

*Lucy.* I have, madam; and, though I say it, as promising, genteel, well-spoken a young man as you would wish to set your eyes on; he's my only brother, madam.

*Let.* Let that be an excuse for your forwardness. I am not inquiring into his character.

*Lucy.* If you did, madam, I assure you it will stand the strictest inquiry; my papa gave us both an education———

*Let.* Your papa! Let it be father in your mouth, if I might advise you.

*Lucy.* Humph! There's a person wants to speak with you.

*Let.* What person?

*Lucy.* A person from abroad—a painting man, I believe; he says he has a recommendation to you—there are many such call here.

*Let.* If he has any letter of recommendation, desire he will be pleased to send it in.—[*Exit* LUCY.]—I cannot reconcile myself to this methodical course of proceeding; in the name of all that's happy, let our inclinations get the start of our proposals. If I could meet this Mr Manlove naturally, and without form; if we were then to single out each other by the guidance of no other monitor than the heart, and if a thou-

sand ifs besides were all to prove realities, a happy alliance might succeed; but to be turned into a room to undergo the profest survey of a man, who comes upon a visit of liking, is insupportably humiliating. It may well be said of some fathers, that they drive a Smithfield bargain for their daughters, when, with butcher-like insensibility they shew them out for sale like cattle in a market.

LUCY *returns.*

*Lucy.* The gentleman presents his respects to you, and desires you to peruse this letter; I think he is altogether as personable a young man as I could wish to see. [*Gives the letter.*

*Let.* Sure you forget yourself! Let me see—from Counsellor Manlove! What is this?

'Madam,

'The bearer of this letter is a young man in 'whose prosperity I am warmly interested. He 'is lately returned from Italy, where he has 'made some proficiency in the art of which you 'are a mistress; and as I flatter myself you will 'find him not unworthy, I beg leave to recommend him to your protection and esteem.—'When my nephew has the honour of being 'known to you, he can give you fuller satisfaction in this young man's particular than I can; 'in the mean time I venture to add, that Mr 'Manlove will consider every favour you bestow 'in this instance, as conferred upon himself. I 'have the honour to be, madam,

'Your most obedient,

'And most humble servant,

'CHARLES MANLOVE.'

Where is the gentleman? Introduce him directly. [*Exit* LUCY.

*Re-enter* LUCY *with* CHARLES.

*Let.* Your humble servant, sir: you are the gentleman referred to in this letter?——

*Cha. Man.* I am the person, madam. What a lovely young woman! [*Aside.*

*Let.* You are lately from Italy: where did you principally pursue your studies?

*Cha. Man.* At Rome: I visited Florence, Bologna, Venice, and other places; but I regard Rome as the grand repository of the antique, and for that reason I made my principal residence there.

*Let.* To what branch of the art did you chiefly direct your attention?

*Cha. Man.* To the study of beauty, madam; and that in its simplest forms: a Laocoon, a Hercules, or a Caracalla may astonish; but it is a Faustina, a Venus, an Apollo that delights, that ravishes—But I am speaking to you on a subject of which you are both by art a mistress, and an example by nature.

*Let.* Upon my word!—[*Aside.*]—Come, sir: we are here in the way of the family: allow me to shew you into another apartment.—[*She stops.*]—Was young Mr Manlove at Rome when you was?

*Cha. Man.* He was.

*Let.* I understand he has a very great regard for you.

*Cha. Man.* I hope I shall not forfeit his good opinion.

*Let.* It does you much honour: all the world speaks highly of Mr Manlove. I'll shew you the way. [*Exit.*

*Cha. Man.* Charming girl! I am in love with her at first sight. [*Exit.*

*Lucy.* So, so! a very promising beginning. As sure as can be, there's something in the wind about this Manlove: I suspect the letter to be a fetch; and, as for this painter, I am mistaken if he is not some how or other in the secret—'tis a mighty pretty fellow.—Ah, brother Dibble, I am glad to see you. How goes the world with you?

*Enter* DIBBLE.

*Dib.* Busily, my girl, busily. I have borrowed a moment's time from company to run to you: I have luckily found you alone: utter not a word; be all attention: Jack Nightshade, the country boy I made acquaintance with last year, is now in town; but not a word of that—he is at a tavern hard by, with some lads of mettle, who push about the glass. What say you, hussy, to a bold stroke for a husband?

*Lucy.* For a husband! You are joking.

*Dib.* Serious, upon my honour! Oh, when the blood begins to boil, and the brain begins to turn, every thing may be attempted. He has signified to me that he is in want of a wife; you, I suppose, have no objection to a husband? so far you are both of a mind. He says the lady must be rich; the condition is a reasonable one, and you must provide a fortune for the purpose. What say you to your mistress's? He visits you in the name of Mr Manlove; why may not you receive him in that of Miss Fairfax?

*Lucy.* Impossible! Don't you know his father lodges in this very house?

*Dib.* Scare boys with bug-bears: I have provided against danger; and with a promise of a good round sum, upon the wedding night, have made old Gregory my own: He will aid our project, and keep watch upon old Surly-boots, I warrant you.

*Lucy.* But what is gained, if we should compass our ends? the young man is a minor, and his father would disinherit him.

*Dib.* Fear nothing—he's of age—Gregory confirms it: And as for his father's disinheriting him, I'll tell you a secret; it is not in his power: When the counsellor settled an estate on Charles, old Nightshade cut him off with a shilling, and gave his fortune to Jack: I drew

the deed myself; it is as tight as the law can tye it.

*Lucy.* I don't know what to say; a settlement to be sure is something; Mrs Nightshade and an equipage, is better than plain Lucy and a pair of pattens: But then my heart misgives me—and the boy, they say, is such a cub———

*Dib.* Fine airs in truth! Nay, if you are so exceptious, please yourself; 'tis no affair of mine; I've done with it.

*Lucy.* Hold, hold; you are so touchy if one speaks—My madam must be monstrous angry, but no matter. Yesterday was married John Nightshade, esq. to Miss———. O Gemini! 'twill make a flaming dash!

*Dib.* Ay, ay, leave me to draw the marriage deeds; I'll jointure you, I warrant. Come, decide; time's precious, and the moment serves; Old Nightshade's out; the ladies too, I understand are on the wing—When shall we come?

*Lucy.* When? I don't know—I vow I'm half afraid—Is there no law against me, if I'm caught, and the scheme fails?

*Dib.* Pshaw! you are so irresolute; even be a servant-maid all the days of your life; I care not.

*Lucy.* No, brother; I've as much ambition as my betters, so here's my hand—I'm with you—give me half an hour's time to con my lesson, and I'll be ready for you.

*Dib.* That's my brave girl! Courage! the day's our own. If every thing's in train, and the coast clear, let Gregory meet us at the corner of the street, exactly in half an hour's time. But, hark'e, Lucy, Jack is incog, and takes his brother Manlove's name, remember that: By the way, I suspect something's in the wind between your madam and Mr Charles.

*Lucy.* Why so?

*Dib.* Because I saw him turn into her room just now, in an undress; he passed me on the stairs, and whispered me in the ear, not to open my lips concerning his being here to a single soul, for my life; therefore make no mischief ---Farewell, I must be gone. [*Exit.*

*Lucy.* Your humble servant, virtuous Miss Letitia Fairfax; your painter then, as I suspected, turns out a lover in disguise; and you, it seems, have your intrigues as well as other folks. Who would be nice about character in these times, when all the world conspires to put virtue out of countenance, and keep vice in? [*Exit.*

## ACT III.

SCENE I.—*A Room in* STAPLETON'S *house.*

*Enter* MR ANDREW NIGHTSHADE *and* STAPLETON.

*A. Night.* AND so you'll positively ship those bales of Norwich crape for Holland?

*Stap.* I purpose so to do.

*A. Night.* You purpose so to do! and the kersies and callimancoes, and perpetuanos too, I warrant?

*Stap.* I do.

*A. Night.* The devil you do! I tell you what then, Master Stapleton, they will not have their name for nothing; you will find them perpetuanoes on your hands: I'd send tea to America as soon. Why sure I understand the Dutch market; sure I think I do; you've found I understand them.

*Stap.* But times are altered, friend Andrew.

*A. Night.* With the devil to them! Times are altered truly, and trade is altered, and merchants are altered, and grown obstinate blockheads, deaf to good counsel, ignorant of their business; a frivolous, gossiping, pleasure-hunting crew; forsaking their counters for their country-houses, Change for Change Alley.——What sort of a season at Newfoundland? have you shipped your fish yet for the Mediterranean markets? But what is it all to me? I have wound up my bottom: 'Twas a noble hit, Master Stapleton, that speculation of mine in saltpetre.

*Stap.* I believe it turned to tolerable account.

*A. Night.* I believe it did; I may venture to assure you it did, to tolerable account, as you say, though you predicted otherwise; it made my pillow for me; yes, yes, thank Heaven, I'm easy: I've laid down my cares.

*Stap.* And taken up content. What a happy fellow are you, friend Andrew!

*A. Night.* But I tell you, you're mistaken, I am not a happy fellow; I would not be thought happy; the world's too wicked for an honest man to be happy or contented in it.

*Stap.* But you are out of the world; you are settled in a peaceful retreat, in rural tranquillity, cultivating your own acres, enjoying your own produce.

*A. Night.* Blood and fire, I tell you other people are enjoying my produce! my servants are embezzling my property, my neighbours are destroying my game, the vermin are laying waste my granaries, and the rot is making havock with my sheep; and how the vengeance, then, can I be happy?

*Stap.* By bearing every thing with a patient mind.

*A. Night.* Patient! I am patient to a fault.

*Stap.* By reflecting when your servants or neighbours molest you, what an exemplary young man you are blest with for a son.

*A. Night.* Yes, yes; the boy's as good as his neighbours.

*Stap.* I never heard so universal a good character.

*A. Night.* 'Tis a sober, frugal lad, that's the truth on't.

*Stap.* So accomplished a genius—so distinguished a taste for the fine arts!

*A. Night.* For the fine arts! that's rather too much: I know no art Jack has, but setting trimmers, worming puppies, and making fowling nets. [*Aside.*

*Stap.* Your son, friend Andrew, is not like the present frippery race of young men; he is a man of sound principle, and good morals; no libertine, no free-thinker, no gamester.

*A. Night.* Gamester indeed! I'd game him, with the devil to him!

*Stap.* He has more elegant resources: The woman must be happy who can engage his affections.

*A. Night.* I wish your ward, Miss Fairfax, was of your opinion.

*Stap.* Are you sincere?

*A. Night.* Why, to be sure I am. Don't I know she'll have a very considerable fortune?

*Stap.* A fig for her fortune!—here's my hand—so the young folks can like each other, and Mr Manlove is consenting———

*A. Night.* Who? who is consenting? Mr Manlove?

*Stap.* Ay, surely; I'm afraid we do not rightly understand each other: Which of your sons are you speaking of?

*A. Night.* Which of my sons am I speaking of? the only one I ever do speak of; the only one which I acknowledge—Jack. You couldn't think me such a fool to recommend that puppily, pig-tailed ape, with his essences and pulvilios—that monkey, whom my silly brother sent to see the world, with his grand tour, and his pictures, and his impertinences? No; I tell you once for all, I've done with him; he has dropt my name, and I my nature; let him that christened him anew, keep him—I have done with him!

*Stap.* You shock me to hear you say so!

*A. Night.* What! shan't I speak of my own son as I think fit?

*Stap.* Yes, if you speak as a father should.

*A. Night.* And who's the judge of that? Have you a son? Are you a father? No, you are a guardian: Heaven help the poor young woman that is your ward! Marry her to Charles Manlove! Marry her to her garters sooner, and tie her up upon the curtain rod! 'twere a better deed. And what know you of the fine arts? Are you a painter as well as your ward here? I see no tokens of it: the London 'prentice and the March to Finchly, seem to be the sum-total of your collection. His taste, it seems, has captivated you. His taste for what? for camblets, for caloys, for Manchester and Norwich commodities? There lies your learning; those are your universities.

*Stap.* Andrew Nightshade, Andrew Nightshade, recollect yourself! We'll converse when you are cool; I talk to no man in a passion.

*A. Night.* I in a passion! 'Tis the first time I was ever told so, and shall be the last, from you, at least.—Here, Gregory, where are you?—I'll be gone this instant; I'll have my things packed up; I'll rid your house, at least, of one passionate man. I in a passion! I, that never lost my temper—But your servant, sir: your servant, Mr Stapleton: Perhaps you'll say I'm in a passion now. Here, Gregory! why, Gregory! [*Exit.*

*Stap.* Ha, ha, ha! of a certain, Andrew, thou art a ridiculous old fellow! If I had an acquaintance with the poets, I would get them to exhibit thy humours on the stage; 'twould be a diverting scene, and no bad moral.

*Enter* MRS STAPLETON *and* LETITIA.

*Mrs Stap.* Here's a fine storm! he's calling for his servant to pack up his things; he vows he'll quit the house immediately.

*Let.* A happy resolution! What a snapdragon it is! No Yorkshire housewife, in her washing week, can be more peevish.

*Mrs Stap.* I wish he was out of the house; I cannot bear to have your peace annoyed.

*Stap.* My peace! You have had a visitor, Letitia?

*Let.* A brother artist, and a friend of Mr Manlove's.—I declare I've lost my heart to him.

*Stap.* Then, I deny that he's a friend of Mr Manlove's.

*Let.* Oh, sir, he is the prettiest man! so candid, so intelligent! full of his art, and glowing warm with all that taste for the antique, which true genius is sure to gain by travel!

*Stap.* Ay, ay; I understand you; he's been praising your performances.

*Let.* I own it; but, what flatters me above all, he commends your portrait exceedingly: I shall proceed in it with twice the spirit I began.

*Mrs Stap.* He has turned her head with flattery; the grace of Raphael, the design of Michael Angelo, Titian's warmth, and Corregio's beauty, centre all in her unrivalled compositions!

*Stap.* Hey-day! where learnt you all this gabble? here's a pack of names for a citizen's wife to get by heart!

*Mrs Stap.* Do you think I've cleaned her pallet, then, for nothing? The doctor's Merry-Andrew knows the names of his drugs, or he's not fit for his place. We are going this instant upon a visit of virtû to Mr Manlove's: This young painter speaks in raptures of his collection: He has some pictures which are said to be inimitable.

*Let.* Dear sir, I hope you've no objection. He

has talked to me so much of a Lucretia by Guido, that I am dying to visit her.

*Stap.* I should doubt, if Lucretia would do as much for you. I hardly think, that this visit is in rule.

*Let.* It is done every day; half the town has been there: I go there as a student—Besides, Mrs Stapleton goes with me.

*Stap.* Well, well; I am no critic in these matters: entertain yourselves, and you have my free leave. Much pleasure to you both—your servant. [*Exit.*

*Let.* Come, my dear madam, the light still serves us; let us lose no time. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE II.—*The painting-room.*

*Enter* LUCY.

*Lucy.* Now, the deuce fetch this madcap brother of mine; what a twitter has he thrown me into! I can settle to nothing: Madam, and her sham painter have made a fine disorder in this room. I don't know any use these geniuses are of, but to put every thing out of its place. Ah! is it you?

*Enter* DIBBLE.

*Dib.* Hush, hush! compose yourself; you had like to have ruined all: Why didn't you send Gregory to the street's end, as you agreed?

*Lucy.* Lud, I'm in such a flutter!—I don't know, I'm frighted. Is he here?

*Dib.* Ready: Primed high with brisk Champaigne: The train is laid; you have the fire; touch it, and off it goes.

*Lucy.* Fire! I've no fire about me. Did the servant see you?

*Dib.* No; Gregory let us in, and has the young 'squire now in keeping. There never was so fortunate a moment. Hark! he's at the door.

*Jack.* [*From without.*] Hist! Lawyer—Pickle—Bully Jack!——shall I come in?

*Dib.* He must come in. Slip out a moment till I prepare him; and then—remember Lucy, he is Mr Manlove here, and yourself Letitia. Go your ways. [*Exit* LUCY.] Now, my lad of glory, I shall show you a phenomenon, a star of the first water.

*Enter* JACK NIGHTSHADE.

*J. Night.* Water! I scorn it: Give me wine: There's honesty in that, and wit, and love—I'm monstrously in love—But where's the lady?

*Dib.* Oh! she's at hand, and half your own already. I've been preaching to her——Miss, says I———

*J. Night.* Rot your says I! who cares for what you say. Show me the girl: I want no lawyer in this case; Champaigne's my counsellor. You are a blockhead, Dibble, and a flincher! I'm for all the game: fee'd on both sides, boy; a bottle in my right hand, and a bottle in my left; double charged at heart and head—one for courage, and t'other for invention.——Pooh! my brother's a fool to me: his coat was never in such company before. Where is the lady, I say? I must see the lady.

*Dib.* Well, well, be patient; you shall see the lady. [*Exit.*

*J. Night.* Ay, this puts every thing in motion. Now the world goes round: It has found its legs at last, and dances like Plough-Monday. Drown it, 'twas asleep before. What's all this lumber for? [*Stumbling over the easel.*] The devil! who are you? [*Speaking to the layman.*] what's your profession? An easy, slender, dangling figure, and as much of a gentleman as most you shall meet.—Toe piggins! now I smoke the jest: She paints. O damn it! she's an artist—That won't do; there's no standing that; I must overturn all this trumpery: I shall soon tumble you out of the room, my dear—your reign's a short one, take my word.—Ay, here she comes.

*Enter* DIBBLE *with* LUCY.

*Dib.* Mr Manlove, this is Miss Fairfax. Miss, this is Mr Manlove.

*J. Night.* Madam, behold the fondest of your slaves. My friend here, Lawyer Dibble, has informed you, that my name is Manlove, and he tells me you are called Miss Fairfax. Be it so; if he tells a lie, he is not the first of his profession who has so done. If you should think that I am rather elevated and in the air, I won't deny it; Champaigne, you know, is a searching liquor, and my skull is none of the deepest: but if you suppose, that I am so blind as to overlook your beauties, or my own perfections, you are not the person I take you for. Dibble, come hither; make the lady acquainted with some of my good qualities. Discuss.

*Lucy.* Oh, sir, what need? the good qualities of Mr Manlove are in every body's mouth.

*J. Night.* Deuce take me now, if that is any flattery to me!

*Dib.* I told you, madam, what a modest young gentleman he is.

*J. Night.* Oh, you're a precious devil! Be pleased to tell the lady, likewise, what a brave estate I have got; such things come naturally enough from a lawyer's mouth; tell her what it is, and where it lies: Drown me, if I know where to find an acre of it!

*Lucy.* Oh, never name estate, when Mr Manlove is in the case! Your person, air, address—

*J. Night.* Madam, you do me honour. Egad, I shall have no occasion for courtship! [*Aside.*

*Lucy.* Your genius, taste, accomplishments—I myself have some small turn for painting——

*J. Night.* Yes, and I should like you as well without it. [*Aside.*

*Lucy.* But you, I dare say, are a master hand; and poetry, no doubt, is full as much your own.

*J. Night.* Faith! there's not much to choose between them.

*Lucy.* But, then, your education—one may see that you have travelled.

*Dib.* Oh, yes; that's very visible.

*J. Night.* Well said, lawyer—She has a damnable clack!

*Lucy.* I should be delighted to hear an account of your travels: I dare say you have met many singular adventures.

*J. Night.* A thousand: but I have taken an oath never to speak of them.

*Lucy.* Oh, you must conquer such scruples! What advantages has your uncle's bounty given you, Mr Manlove, over that poor lad in the country!

*J. Night.* And yet I'd rather hear one kind word said of that poor lad in the country, than a whole volume of Mr Manlove's praises. I'm hipped whenever I hear the subject mentioned.

*Dib.* Make up to him, Lucy, or he's lost! Jack Nightshade, what are you about? One bold attack, and she's your own.

*J. Night.* It may be so; but you must know I have a kind of partiality for that same country lubber, Jack Nightshade; and, till I can find a lady, who will prefer him to his brother, I will remain as I am: so there's an end of the matter, d'ye see, and no harm done.———Madam, your servant. [*Exit.*

*Lucy.* So finishes the chapter of husbands—I thank you for your scheme.

*Dib.* Thank yourself for your folly. What possest you with the thought of touching upon the lad in the country? how could you be so flippant?

*Lucy.* What does it signify? He is too cunning to be caught with chaff; e'en drop your project.

*Dib.* No, let despair go hang. I am not easily repulsed: Take courage, and commit yourself to me; I have resources yet you know not of. Come, Lucy, you shall see my genius rises on defeat. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—MANLOVE'S *house.*

*Enter* CHARLES MANLOVE.

*Cha. Man.* It is time to throw off the mask. I have seen and heard enough: she, who can captivate both eyes and ears at once, is irresistible! Miss Fairfax is so composed, that she has beauty enough to blind our understandings, if she wanted wit; and wit enough to blind our eyes, if she wanted beauty. I will go to her in this habit once again, and solicit an interview for Mr Manlove: If she readily grants it, I will avail myself of her compliance, and instantly disclose myself. If not—But what in the name of wonder have we got here! Ha, ha, ha! my Paris suit, by all that's brilliant! the very *chef d'œuvre* of the superlative Mons. Le Duc: That coat was made for grand occasions; it escorted me to the nuptials of the great count d'Artois; it has now the honour to attend the revels of the illustrious Jack Nightshade!

*Enter* JACK NIGHTSHADE.

*J. Night.* Ay, and had I been willing, it might have assisted at another wedding: 'Egad, it might have carried off a fine girl, and one of the first fortunes in the city.

*Cha. Man.* I should have thought your scenes had rather laid amongst the girls of freedom than of fortune!

*J. Night.* This lady, sir, had both. Swear to me you'll be secret, and I'll tell where I've been.

*Cha. Man.* Nay, Jack, you'll trust me, sure, without an oath? You know I am no tell-tale. Where have you been?

*J. Night.* You'll scarce believe it—where on all this earth but to the very house where old Surly-boots sets up his rest!

*Cha. Man.* To Mr Stapleton's?

*J. Night.* To the enemy's head-quarters. A high stroke!

*Cha. Man.* And what carried you thither?

*J. Night.* A girl: The wench I told you of.

*Cha. Man.* But what sort of a wench? I don't understand how any girl could carry you to Mr Stapleton's.

*J. Night.* No! she'd have carried me any where; all the world over: she is ready to set out on her travels.

*Cha. Man.* And her name is——

*J. Night.* Fairfax.

*Cha. Man.* How!

*J. Night.* Letitia Fairfax.

*Cha. Man.* What is it you have been doing? I am much interested in this lady's good opinion, and if you have done or said any thing to offend her——

*J. Night.* Offend her! Zooks, if you had heard how mere a country whelp she made of me, you would own I had most reason to be offended of the two.

*Cha. Man.* Still I don't understand you; you tell your story confusedly; I can make out nothing from it!

*J. Night.* Tell it yourself, then, brother.

*Cha. Man.* But this precaution I must give you, Jack, not to go upon that ground again—keep your sallies within proper bounds, and direct them to proper objects. Miss Fairfax is a lady for whom I have the tenderest esteem; have a care therefore, young man, how you affront her, as you value my resentment.

*J. Night.* Whuh!

*Enter* FREDERICK.

*Fred.* Sir, Mr Manlove requests your company at his chambers immediately.

*Cha. Man.* I attend him—Brother, I am serious—Hitherto, I hope no mischief has been

done; but I expect that you observe what I have told you, and be more prudent for the future.

[*Exit* CHA. MAN.

*J. Night.* And be a prig like you?—Oh, you shall smart for this; I'll curry your fine hide. Now would I give both ears from off this head, if I could make the girl but fairly jilt this puppy, and revenge myself upon him!

*Enter* DIBBLE.

*Dib.* Squire!

*J. Night.* Ah, Dibble, I have made myself a precious blockhead!

*Dib.* What, in the penitentials! Is the champaigne cloudy?

*J. Night.* Vexation sobers me like a wet napkin. Oh, if I could see the girl again!

*Dib.* Do you wish it?

*J. Night.* Wish it! I'd crawl to Scotland on my knees; nay, more, I'd live there all my days, so I could bilk this elder brother with Miss Fairfax.

*Dib.* Say you so, 'squire? This betters my best hopes. Follow me once more to Mr Stapleton's: take courage, and my life upon't the lady is your own.

*J. Night.* Have with you then; I'm ready; come along.

*Dib.* Hold! not so fast—the old lion may be in his den. Give me one quarter of an hour's law, and then, if we miscarry, crop these ears, and nail them up like vermin to your walls.

*J. Night.* Agreed! I take you at your word—[*Exit* DIB] Now, my fine brother, if I catch you on the hip I'll give your pride a fall! I'll shew you, that a clown may have a courtier's cunning. Heyday! who comes here?

*Enter* MRS STAPLETON, *and* LETITIA, *ushered in by* FREDERICK.

*Fred.* I beg pardon, sir; I thought you was gone out: these ladies are desirous of seeing the pictures, and I was conducting them to the room.

*J. Night.* I will take that honour on myself. Go before, and open the windows. [*Exit* FRED.] You are fond of paintings, ladies; I am glad it is in my power to entertain you.

*Mrs Stap.* You are the owner, sir, of this admirable collection. Your name is Manlove.

*J. Night.* At the service of the ladies always. I'll pass a few of lawyer Dibble's airs upon them---I'm in a rare cue. [*Aside.*

*Let.* What do you mean by talking up this young man! He has a miserable address: I see very little of the man of fashion about him.

*Mrs Stap.* I cannot say much for his person, to be sure.

*J. Night.* She has fixt her eyes upon me; she is taken with my person and address---Don't you find it rather cold, ladies?---I wish there was a fire in the room, that I might give her a taste of my breeding. [*Aside.*

*Let.* The public is much bound to you for giving them access to your collection.

*J. Night.* If the public found no more amusement in them than I do, they might hang in the dark till doomsday.

*Let.* You jest, I believe: is it possible, after such pains in procuring them, you can have no enjoyment in the possession of them?

*J. Night.* Even so, madam; they resemble matrimony in that respect; the pursuit is the pleasure. But come, ladies, the room is ready, and I'll shew you the way. What the devil does that old duenna come for? [*Goes out.*

*Let.* Is this the accomplished Mr Manlove? He seems in a strange humour! are you sure he is perfectly sober? I declare I scarce like to follow him.

*J. Night.* [*Returns.*] Ladies, this is the way: indulge me with the honour of your hand!

[*Leads out* LET. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE IV.—*An apartment, magnificently furnished with pictures.*

*Enter* JACK, *introducing* MRS STAPLETON *and* LETITIA.

*J. Night.* There, ladies! there they hang! a jolly crew of them! Old ladies in furs and furbelows up to their throats, and young ones without a rag to cover them: these painters are but scurvy tailors; they'll send a goddess into the world without a cloud to cover her: there are some pretty conceits go with their histories, but they will speak for themselves; I am but little in their secrets.

*Let.* What a blaze of beauty! There's the Titian Venus; Heavens! what a form! what brilliant hues! But look, dear madam, here is grace and dignity; Guido's Lucretia, the dagger in her breast, and in the act of heroic self-destruction: what resolution! what a spirit has the great artist thrown into those eyes!

*J. Night.* Yes; she had a devil of a spirit! she stabbed herself in a pique upon being crossed in love.

*Mrs Stap.* You presume on our ignorance; history, I believe, assigns more elevated motives for Lucretia's death.

*J. Night.* Very likely; there were great pains taken to smother the story; but 'tis as I tell you—I had it from a near relation of the family.

*Let.* Ridiculous! Do you observe that picture, madam? 'tis a melancholy story, very finely told by Poussin: it is a view of Marseilles at the time of the plague, with a capital figure of the good bishop in the midst of the groupe.

*J. Night.* Bishop, madam! that person which you look upon is a physician, and the people

round about him are his patients; they are in a desperate way, it must be confest. Do you see that angry figure in the corner? he is a gamester: he is picking lead out of a loaded dice to run into bullets, to fire through his own head: 'tis no bad moral.

*Let.* You are infinitely kind to favour us with these anecdotes: if you are thus gracious to all strangers, the world will edify abundantly. But we won't put you to the trouble of explanation—we are not entirely ignorant—though your collection may be the best we have seen, it is not absolutely the first.

*J. Night.* Belike, then, you are a painter, as well as the lady I visited just now?

*Let.* In the presence of such masters as are here assembled, I cannot call myself a painter; in my own chamber I sometimes persuade myself I am.

*J. Night.* Yes; I am told it is an art which ladies mostly practise in their own chambers—What say you to that picture over the door? 'tis a merry conceit.

*Let.* It is the colouring of the Venetian school: I should guess it to be Tintoret.

*J. Night.* Oh, you are quite out of the story.

*Mrs Stap.* She is speaking of the master: the story is plainly that of Actæon, and no bad moral; he was turned into a stag, by the goddess of chastity, for his impertinent curiosity.

*J. Night.* Excuse me, madam; you mistake the moral—That gentleman, with the antlers on his head, is a city husband, the principal lady in the show is his wife; she wears a crescent on her forehead, to signify she is a dealer in horns; her companions are a group of city madams: the painter drew them bathing, to shew the warmth of their constitutions.

*Let.* Upon my word, you have a great deal of wit, and you have a fine collection of paintings! but one capital piece is wanting.

*J. Night.* And what is that, pray?

*Let.* Modesty: it will be an excellent companion to your Lucretia.

*J. Night.* But who shall I get to sit for the likeness?

*Let.* You will find it admirably painted by the same master. Come, madam, it is time for us to be gone.

*J. Night.* You are not for the city end of the town, I conclude?

*Mrs Stap.* Our home is in the city.

*J. Night.* Permit me to conduct you thither: I have a coach in waiting, and am bound to New Broad-Street, if you know such a place.

*Mrs Stap.* Intimately; but we have a carriage of our own.

*Let.* Can there be any attractions in the city to engage Mr Manlove's regard?

*J. Night.* Oh, yes; an assignation, madam: I am loth to disappoint a fond girl.

*Let.* 'Tis charitably considered!

*J. Night.* Nay, I don't know but I should be inclined to take her for better for worse, if it was not for one circumstance in her disfavour.

*Let.* May I ask what that may be?

*J. Night.* She has a devilish itch for painting: I should expect to have all my gods and goddesses taken down to make room for her vulgar friends and relations.

*Mrs Stap.* Ay; that would be a sorrowful exchange to my knowledge.

*Let.* Yes; have a care of that same painting girl; my life upon it she will slip through your hands.

*J. Night.* Why, I have my eye upon that honest gentleman in the picture, with the stag's horns, I must own—Who shall I tell her gave me the caution?

*Let.* No matter; when you see Miss Fairfax, you'll remember me.

*J. Night.* Fairfax! the vengeance! how came you to guess her name?

*Let.* Oh, sir, there is but one painter in the street, and she, I believe, will remain there: your collection is safe; she will trouble you with none of her performances, none of her daubings, take my word. Your most obedient—Let us make haste home, and be ready to receive him: vain, senseless coxcomb! how I shall enjoy his confusion! [*Exit with* MRS STAP.

*J. Night.* A good lively wench, but the devil of a tongue! I'll run and hand her to her coach. [*Exit.*

## ACT IV.

### SCENE I.—*An apartment.*

*Enter* DIBBLE *and* LUCY.

*Lucy.* STILL I protest against your project; we shall reap nothing from it, but shame and disappointment; however, to convince you that my fears are not for myself, I am prepared, and shall go through with it as you desire.

*Dib.* My life upon it, he takes the bait this time.

*Lucy.* I doubt it, but no matter: sure it is time that he was come. Hark! who is that? look out.

*Dib.* 'Sdeath! Mrs Stapleton and Miss Letitia!

*Lucy.* What's to be done now?

*Dib.* We've nothing for it, but a desperate sally; slip the back-way down with me, and let us both go out and stop young Nightshade: we can take him to my lodgings, and prevent an interview that must be fatal.

*Lucy.* It is too late to deliberate: come on. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter* MRS STAPLETON *and* LETITIA.

*Mrs Stap.* Come, my dear Letitia, you think of this affair too seriously: you cannot much regret a man you never saw before.

*Let.* 'Tis true; and yet, with shame I own it to you, I am mortified severely. Was there ever such a disappointment?

*Mrs Stap.* Either he treated us with inexcusable contempt, or is profoundly ignorant. Did you remark the ridiculous observations he made on some of the pictures?

*Let.* Yes; but I set that down for mistaken wit; in short, his manners are of the vulgarest cast. Are these the fruits of public education? Is this the finished gentleman? the scholar? traveller? —His boorish brother in the country cannot outgo this: and the world to be so blinded! Oftentimes it speaks worse of a man than he deserves; it is seldom guilty of telling so many untruths in his favour.

*Enter Servant.*

*Ser.* A gentleman desires to speak with Miss Fairfax.

*Let.* 'Tis he!—Conduct him into the drawing-room; I'll wait on him immediately. [*Exit Ser.*

*Mrs Stap.* Well, Letitia, I need not recommend to you to treat him as he deserves.

*Let.* I must be more or less than woman, if I spared him. [*Exeunt severally.*

*Enter* JACK NIGHTSHADE, *introduced by a Servant.*

*Ser.* Please to walk in here, sir; Miss Fairfax will wait on you immediately. [*Exit.*

*J. Night.* Ay, ay; I dare say she will: Egad, there's no time to be lost—Drown it, where's Dibble? I expected he would meet me at the gate: If I should stumble on old Crusty—I don't like the looks of the land so well as I did: Here's such a solitude, and such a ceremony—Why the plague do they make me kick my heels here? What, the vengeance! is she come again?

*Enter* LETITIA.

*Let.* Your humble servant, Mr Manlove: You scarce expected, I believe, to meet your visitor again so soon?

*J. Night.* No, indeed: it is vastly beyond my hopes.

*Let.* You are punctual to your assignation, I perceive?

*J. Night.* Oh yes, madam: to be sure, madam —How the plague shall I get rid of her?

*Let.* You did well to consider the poor, fond girl, that is dying for you.

*J. Night.* She has the devil of an assurance— What are these London ladies made of?

*Let.* He is thoroughly confounded! I'll give him a chance, however.—Have you any commands for me, sir?

*J. Night.* Commands! Oh, none in life, I thank you; no commands. What, won't that serve?. No; She will have her talk out, at least. I hope you liked the pictures? Sure, Miss Fairfax will come presently.

*Let.* I admire your collection greatly; my expectations, in that particular, were not disappointed.

*J. Night.* I understand your insinuation, madam; but ladies' expectations, I am told, are not always to be satisfied.

*Let.* In Mr Manlove's instance, perhaps, not easily.

*J. Night.* Really, madam, I should wish to do justice to a lady's good opinion: but your visit, I must say, was rather unseasonable, and that elderly lady was so vexatiously in the way——

*Let.* I am sorry for it, sir: I am afraid our visit was rather out of rule.

*J. Night.* That's honest now; and since you own it, I must fairly say, the present is none of the most welcome.

*Let.* I readily believe it—and therefore, sir, though it is not altogether in character for me to promote a conversation of such a sort as you hinted at when we met at your own house; yet, I must observe to you, if you have any such proposal in design, it will be for both our ease that you should come to the point directly.

*J. Night.* To the point, madam! Upon my soul, I don't know what to say to that—To be sure, I did come here with a full and fixed design of offering myself to Miss Fairfax upon the marrying lay, and that, you know, at best, is but a hanging kind of job; so that, if I appear rather dull of apprehension, I hope you will recollect that a man cannot be very merry when he's on his road to his execution.

*Let.* Oh, sir, be under no concern on that account; assure yourself, I have, to the full, as little disposition towards that state as you can have.

*J. Night.* Well said again! but it won't take.— You are in the right; you are for enjoying your freedom.

*Let.* Since we are both agreed in that respect, what occasion is there for more words? I believe we may break up the conference.

*J. Night.* As soon as ever you please; I am by no means for delaying you.

*Let.* I wait your motions, Mr Manlove; I'm here at home.

*J. Night.* You cannot be more so than I am.

*Let.* Indeed! this conduct, Mr Manlove, is so opposite to all that I expected from you, that I'm cast into astonishment. Upon what reasons, or from what caprice, you've chose to take it up, I know not; natural it cannot be to any man. However, sir, I'll take you at your word, and, for a moment, will suppose you more welcome in this

house than you really are, and leave you in possession of it. [*Exit* LET.

*J. Night.* Come, come, well off; I've bolted her at last. 'Fore George, I begin to be tired of my plumes: Every man's best in his own coat and his own character: Plain Jack, and the country, would have suited me better: There are so many demands upon a fine gentleman, that nobody but a fine gentleman can tell how to avoid them.

*Enter* GREGORY.

*Gre.* Ah! Master Jacky, keep close. Yonder's your old dad at the street door in a notable primmuniry.

*J. Night.* Death and the devil! how shall I break pasture without his seeing me?

*Gre.* Never fear it; he has a job upon his hands will tether him for one while. Egad, I hope they'll treat him with a ducking.

*J. Night.* What is the matter?

*Gre.* Nay, nothing out of course; he has cracked the newsman's noddle for winding his horn in his ear; he pretends to have delicate nerves, you know; and so the fellow raised a mob upon him, that has drove him into cover, and they are now baying the old buck at the door. Ay, yonder he is; you must keep close till he's off his stand.

*J. Night.* Have an eye upon the door—I hope they will scare him soundly; it may save your skull, and mine, many a hard pelt. But, Gregory, who is this fine madam I've been talking to? Lawyer Dibble, sure, has not put me on a wrong scent: They introduced her to me as Miss Fairfax; are there two Miss Fairfaxes, as well as two Mr Manlove's?—a false one, and a true one?

*Gre.* What shall I say now?—Oh, yes, there are two ladies of that name; but, this is only a cousin of the other; a kind of hanger-on in the family.

*J. Night.* A hanger-on, do you say?—Keep your eye upon the door——Why, she's better dressed, and a finer woman than her I'm in pursuit of.

*Gre.* Ay, ay; but your's has the fortune; Dibble's Miss Fairfax is the girl for your purpose.

*J. Night.* But where is Dibble and his Miss Fairfax? I have danced attendance here a pretty while; what am I to think of all this?

*Gre.* What are you to think of it? why, I'll tell you; this young lady, d'ye see—Now, don't you go about, Master Jacky, and say that I told you, but this young lady here, that you have been to, is—Hark, sure your father's coming.

*J. Night.* I hear his foot upon the stairs; my bones ach at the sound of it.

*Gre.* Quick, quick! down the back stairs; and away for your life! so, so; that's well! [*Exit* J. NIGHT.

*Enter* MR ANDREW NIGHTSHADE.

*A. Night.* Why, Gregory, rascal, hangdog! what's become of you? run quickly down, and drive those bawling fellows from the gate.

*Gre.* A herd of wolves as soon; they'll eat me up alive. O lack-a-day, sir! you know little of a London mob.

*A. Night.* Go down, I tell you, sirrah, and disperse them.

*Gre.* Why, sir, 'tis more than my lord mayor can do: There's a man knocked o' the head they say; and, till there's another or two to keep him company, they'll never be at rest—Leave them to fight it out.

*A. Night.* Leave them! why, blockhead, it is me they follow: Nothing else should have driven me into this house again.

*Gre.* O, Gemini, have you been knocked o' the head?

*A. Night.* Why no, you fool; 'tis I have done the mischief; but the most patient man alive could not do less.

*Gre.* Nay, sir, if you have been playing the same tune upon their noddles, as you do upon mine, these London skulls won't bear it; they are as brittle as a Shrewsbury cake.

*Enter* STAPLETON.

*Stap.* Hey-day, friend Andrew! what is all this noise and outcry?

*A. Night.* I think the devil's in the people! You shall hear—As I was coming down the street, in meditation on the parson's pigeon-house, a rascally scaramouch, in a short jerkin, with a cap and feather on his noddle, winds me a damned blast on his horn, point blank into my ear, flourishing his newspapers full in my face at the same time: Now, as there are no two things on earth I hate like newspapers and noises; so, I could not well avoid giving him a gentle remembrance, with my cane, upon his crown: The casket gave a cursed crack, and down tumbled the politician: Instantly the raggamuffians collected, and I took refuge here in your courtyard.

*Stap.* Nay, if you have silenced the Morning Post, you had better have dragged the speaker out of his coach, and beat his brains out with the mace. Do you consider how many enemies you make by stopping the circulation of abuse? 'tis as necessary to the city as the circulation of cash.

*A. Night.* Go down, I tell you, fellow, and make up the matter with a dram; 'tis as much as any newspaper head is worth in the kingdom; bid him not talk of damages; if my cane has split his skull, 'tis no more than his plaguy post-horn did by mine. He was the aggressor.

*Stap.* Hark'e, you'll find the matter settled,

but it will not be amiss to frighten him a little. You know how to manage it?

[*Aside to* GREGORY.

*Gre.* Most daintily, I warrant you.

[*Exit* GREG.

*Enter* MRS STAPLETON *and* LETITIA.

*Let.* O, Mr Nightshade, here's a piece of work! this comes of being in a passion.

*Mrs Stap.* A sober citizen, a pains-taking industrious soul——

*Let.* A father of a family—eight helpless babes—I fear you have given him his last blow. Dear sir, assist us! [*Aside.*

*A. Night.* Last blow! what matters that, when he gave me the first!

*Mrs Stap.* Well, well, Heaven knows; but anger is a frightful thing; it turns a man into a fury. Defend me, I say, from a passionate man!

*A. Night.* And yet, madam, give me leave to tell you, you are enough to make one: Is it nothing to have our nerves lacerated, our whole fabrick shook to atoms, by these horrid noises! The law should provide against such nuisances.

*Stap.* The law regards breaking of heads as the greater nuisance of the two—But here comes Gregory——Well, what has become of the postman?

*Enter* GREGORY.

*Gre.* He has sounded his last horn! You may sleep in quiet for the future. I tendered him the dram your honour was so good to offer; but his teeth are closed, he cannot accept your favour.

*Mrs Stap.* O horrible, you've killed the man!

*Stap.* What say the standers by on the occasion?

*Gre.* They give him an extraordinary character; they say he delivered a hand-bill, and sounded a post horn, better than any man in all the bills of mortality.

*Let.* Thanks to Mr Nightshade, he is likely to make a figure in the bills of mortality still——did you see the wound?

*Gre.* A perilous gash! I would not have such a star in my forehead to be the richest alderman in the city of London.

*A. Night.* 'Tis a pity but he had been one, for, then, his horns might have warded off the blow.

*Gre.* If I was your honour, I would be looking out for the crowner; it will be well done to touch him pretty handsomely before he calls a quest upon the body.

*Stap.* Has the gentleman thought of any witnesses?

*Gre.* You must have a steady set to prevent accidents, unprejudiced, impartial men, that were not present at the affair; these people will never do. For my part, if you think of subpanæing me, you are a lost man; if I was once to shew this head of mine in open court, you would be condemned on the face of it.

*A. Night.* Hold your tongue, rascal; I don't believe a word you say: I'll go down and be satisfied with my own eyes.

*Stap.* Hold, hold, friend Andrew; I'll not suffer it; they'll tear you piecemeal: stay where you are, and let me see if I can't quiet them; they know me, and will credit what I tell them. If it is as Gregory says, I'll send him to the hospital; we'll save him, if it's possible.

*A. Night.* Thank you, Master Stapleton; thank you heartily. That's friendly howsoever.

[*Exit* STAP.

*Let.* [*To* MRS STAP.] Dear madam, follow Mr Stappleton, and persuade him not to let him off; he must be made to feel.

*Mrs Stap.* I think he should, and will leave him in your hands. [*Exit.*

*Let.* Ah, Mr Nightshade, will you never be brought off from this unhappy temper? You see the dismal effects of it: you feel them; I perceive you do. Your compunction is severe; I pity you—your situation brings the tears into my eyes.

*A. Night.* It's more than it does into mine; I tell you it is all a collusion to extort money; and this rogue of mine falls in with the plot. Stapleton will tell another story.

*Let.* I am afraid not; prepare yourself for the worst, and consider what atonement you can make to a disconsolate widow.

*A. Night.* Spare your pity, young madam; you don't yet know how easy most widows are to be comforted.

*Gre.* To be sure, madam, his honour is in the right to bear up, as they say, but it will be a trepan at least. The china-riveter at the next door is a knowing man in fractures, and he says his skull will never ring well again so long as it is a skull. Oh, sir, what will poor, dear Master Jacky think of this? He's in the country, lord love him, and little dreams of this mishap; I fear 'twill break his heart.

*A. Night.* Hold your tongue, you blockhead! Well, Mr Stapleton, you've seen the man?

*Re-enter* STAPLETON.

*Stap.* I have seen the man, and pacified the mob.

*A. Night.* That's well; and it proves a false alarm?

*Stap.* I wish I could say so———but we must hope the best.

*A. Night.* How! what! sure he is not in danger? This fellow's report I did not regard; your's alarms me.

*Stap.* Compose yourself, however; the symptoms, indeed, are unpromising, but I have put him into good hands; he is conveyed to the London Hospital. Be a man; I am sorry to see you so uneasy.

*Let.* Dear sir, 'tis natural; the worst of men have moments of compunction; it is not to be supposed that Mr Nightshade, though fatally addicted to passion, is totally devoid of human feelings.

*A. Night.* I beg you'll be so kind as to leave me; I should wish to have a minute's recollection. Gregory, you may stay.

[*He retires to the back scene.*

*Stap.* Letitia, I begin to pity him.

*Let.* Have patience: let him chew the cud of reflection. Remorse, sometimes, like an advertising quack, will make great commotion in a man's constitution; but repentance is the regular physician, which by slow, but steady means, conducts the patient to his cure.

[*Exeunt* STAPLETON *and* LETITIA.

*A. Night.* Gregory!

*Gre.* Your honour—How sanctified he looks! as who should say, Gregory, give me a good word on my trial.

*A. Night.* I'm thinking, Gregory, of this accident.

*Gre.* Well, sir, and how do you like it?

*A. Night.* Why, I am in hopes it will blow over; I think they'll hardly prosecute, and if the worst should happen, they can make nothing of it, but chance-medley or manslaughter; nothing else, Gregory: so there's little to fear from the law. But as I am a man, who have always enforced the law against other people, d'ye observe me, and consequently made enemies amongst the wicked; I should think, honest Gregory, you might stand in my place, and I would be sure to bring you off, and reward you into the bargain.

*Gre.* Lord, sir, a trifle! I should be proud of being hanged in the service of so good a master; but I am afraid there were too many people present, and 'twould be gross presumption to suppose any body could mistake me for your honour.

*A. Night.* Why certainly that is a hard pill to swallow; but what is to be done?

*Gre.* Make over your estate to Master Jacky, and fly your country: what if I run to the French walk, and take you a passage in the Boulogne pacquet? I may be in time to secure the cabin before any other malefactor has taken a birth in it.

*A. Night.* Malefactor! prithee, let me hear no more of your advice; it is but wasting time; I must have better counsel; and though brother Manlove has not pleased me in the matter of the pigeon-house, yet he is a good man in the main, and understands his business; run to him, d'ye hear, and desire him to repair here directly, upon a pressing concern; I know he'll not refuse assistance when I really want him.

*Gre.* I'll go directly—This is lucky. [*Aside.*

*A. Night.* And d'ye mind, leave me to open the affair to him; say nothing of the accident.

*Gre.* No, to be sure; a likely matter, truly.

[*Exit.*

*A. Night.* I wish I had not smote him quite so hard; and yet I should have thought no mischief could have followed. I have struck that clodpate twice as hard, a hundred and a hundred times; 'tis that hath spoilt my hand: it is surprising what some heads will bear! I would I was with my poor boy in the country; what evil genius brought me up to this curst scene of mischief and mischance! Dear Fortune, rescue me from this one scrape, and let me scramble out of the next as I can.

[*Exit.*

*Enter* LETITIA, *followed by* CHARLES MANLOVE.

*Let.* Now, sir, be pleased to favour me with your commands.

*Cha. Man.* I am to solicit you in the behalf of Mr Manlove, that he may be allowed the honour of making himself known to you.

*Let.* This is done already; I am no stranger to Mr Manlove, believe me.

*Cha. Man.* So, so: she has discovered me—[*Aside.*] Well, madam, if Mr Manlove is already known to you in his assumed character, may he not hope to improve that acquaintance in his real one?

*Let.* The character he has assumed, I must fairly own to you, gives me no favourable opinion of his real one: the shallow devices he made use of to impose on my understanding, when he thought himself secure from a discovery, betray a disingenuous mind; and, I must believe, that no man would descend from the character of a gentleman, who was not wanting in the requisites that go to the support of it.

*Cha. Man.* I've made myself a precious blockhead! This mummery of the painter has disgusted her. [*Aside.*

*Let.* As to his pretended taste for painting, I will not affect more skill than I possess; but I will venture to say, that either he is ignorant of the art, or presumes upon my being so.

*Cha. Man.* I am fairly trapped: I must be prating of what I did not understand. [*Aside.*]—I will not offer much in Mr Manlove's behalf, madam; but as to skill in painting, you will be pleased to consider him not as a professor, but a lover only of the art.

*Let.* A lover, sir! that is the last character I should wish to consider Mr Manlove in.

*Cha. Man.* I perfectly understand you, Miss Fairfax: you have said enough: Mr Manlove understands you: I believe I need not explain myself any farther.

*Let.* No, the case is perfectly clear; and, I flatter myself, you think I have been explicit on my part.

*Cha. Man.* There can be no complaint on that score. Nothing now remains for Mr Manlove, but to lay aside, as soon as he is able, every

thought, each hope that had Miss Fairfax for its object.

*Let.* 'Twill be much for my repose.

*Cha. Man.* Rely upon it, then, your repose shall never be disturbed by Mr Manlove; never —Adieu! [*Goes out.*

*Let.* Your servant—He's piqued, and it becomes him.

*Cha. Man.* [*Returns.*] If ever you see him here again, say I have deceived you——let me bear the blame: your most obedient.

*Let.* Good day——I'll depend upon you.

*Cha. Man.* Set your mind at rest; I'll die before I break my word: your servant.

[*Exit* CHA:

*Let.* [*Alone.*] How would this man plead in his own cause! Ah, why would Fortune not concert with Nature, and either give the wealth of Manlove to his merits; or purchase out his merits to bestow on Manlove's wealth?

*Enter* LUCY, *hastily.*

*Lucy.* Where can this provoking cloak be laid? Every thing is in train, and there is not a moment to be lost——Ah! [*Screams.*

*Let.* Lucy! Whither away so fast?

*Lucy.* I declare I did not see you, madam; I thought you was in your own room.

*Let.* But where are you running to, child?

*Lucy.* Only stepping out a little way.

*Let.* Stepping out! Whither?

*Lucy.* To my brother Dibble's.

*Let.* For what?

*Lucy.* Upon a little family business, that's all. I could have sworn you had been with your gentleman in the painting-room.

*Let.* My gentleman! Who is it you call my gentleman!

*Lucy.* Humph—I'll shew her that I am in her secrets; it will keep her out of mine.—[*Aside.*] —I thought you was with Mr Manlove; I left you together.

*Let.* Mr Manlove! What is this you tell me?

*Lucy.* Nay, madam, don't be alarmed, I am no tell-tale; and, though I knew Mr Manlove in his painter's character, nobody shall be the wiser for me, I assure you.

*Let.* As sure as can be, it is so! What a discovery!—[*Aside.*]—Well, Lucy, I find you are in the secret; you know the real Mr Manlove; but pray, tell me, who is the pretended one? I have been received at Mr Manlove's house, and visited here, by a young man, who calls himself Manlove: Who is he?

*Lucy.* Oh, dear madam, don't you know him? I wish I don't get into a scrape; but there is no going back.—[*Aside.*]—It is young Mr Nightshade out of the country, madam; he is come up incog, and is afraid his father shall discover him, that's all.

*Let.* Is that all? I shan't take your word for that. I suspect there is more in the plot than you have related. If this young man is afraid of being seen by his father, what brings him hither? Answer me that.

*Lucy.* Madam, I—I—I cannot tell what brings him hither.

*Let.* Lucy, don't equivocate; for I will know. I saw him leave the house, just now, with your brother; you are following in great haste, upon family business, you pretend; but I suspect upon no fair errand. Confess to me, for you shall not stir to your brother's, till you do.

*Lucy.* As you will for that, madam, but I cannot endure to be suspected, and I will confess to you when I have done crying.—[*Weeps.*]

*Let.* Do so; you had best.

*Lucy.* Why, then, you must know, that Mr Manlove—that is—I mean Mr Nightshade, that calls himself Mr Manlove, is fallen monstrously in love with———

*Let.* With whom!

*Lucy.* Me, madam. Vain creature! I know she thought it was herself. [*Aside.*

*Let.* And you believed him, did you?

*Lucy.* Yes, madam, I believed him.

*Let.* Well, and what did he do then?

*Lucy.* Nay, nothing, madam, that's all.

*Let.* Come, come, Lucy, but I know it is not all: You have given him your company, as you call it, have you not? And you are now going to meet him at your brother's, are you not?

*Lucy.* No—yes—but if I am, it's all in fair and honest way of courtship: Oh, if he was to go for to offer any thing unhandsome to me, I should tear his eyes out. Nobody can say I have the least speck or flaw, no, not so big as the point of a pin, on my reputation. It would be the death of me; I would sooner part from my life, than my virtue; he has promised——

*Let.* What has he promised?

*Lucy.* To marry me.

*Let.* Marry you! Ridiculous.

*Lucy.* Ay, I knew the jealous thing could not bear that; she will burst with envy. [*Aside.*

*Let.* Hark'e, Lucy; I commend you for the honesty of your confession; run into my chamber; Mr Stapleton is coming this way, and will interrupt us: compose yourself, and we will talk over the affair at leisure.—[*Exit* LUCY.]—Happy, happy revolution! What a ridiculous *mal entendu* had I fallen into! O how deliciously I will torture this fine gentleman-painter for his contrivances! [*Exit.*

## ACT V.

### SCENE I.

*Enter* JACK NIGHTSHADE *and* DIBBLE.

*Dib.* Come along, 'squire, the lady is expecting you at my apartment. Every thing is in train, and 'twill be your own fault now, if you are not the happiest man in England.

*J. Night.* Hold a moment, Dibble, hold! My brother's coming, and I can't resist the pleasure of a little natural exultation.

*Dib.* Perverse! Vexatious! Are you mad? By Heavens, you'll lose the lady! and, what is worse, by Heaven's she'll lose the gentleman!

[*Aside.*

*Enter* CHARLES MANLOVE.

*Cha. Man.* So, Jack, I hope your frolic is an end: you've been disorderly in your cups, I find.

*J. Night.* Where did you hear that?

*Cha. Man.* Where I least wished to hear it; at Mr Stapleton's; Miss Fairfax told me.

*J. Night.* Miss Fairfax told you, did she so? Miss Fairfax was not very angry when she told you, I should guess: You did not find me greatly out of favour, did you?

*Cha. Man.* In truth, I had so little occasion to boast of my own reception, Jack, that I did not give much attention to what she said of you.

*J. Night.* That is honestly confessed, however: So, your reception was but cold, and you have dropt all thoughts of a connexion, I suppose?

*Cha. Man.* Entirely: I've received my peremptory dismission.

*J. Night.* Poor Charles! You are dismissed? Your person, genius, equipage, estate, all stand you in no stead! Another is preferred before you; perhaps some country booby like myself; and don't you wish you knew the happy man?

*Cha. Man.* Not I.

*Dib.* What are you at? You'll ruin all.

*J. Night.* I shall burst if I don't tell him—— Brother, I believe I could direct you to the man that has done all the mischief.

*Cha. Man.* I give you credit, Jack, for that: I do believe you've done me all the mischief in your power.

*J. Night.* Who, I? Oh, dear, you flatter me! a country whelp supplant a travelled gentleman like you? Impossible—and yet———

*Cha. Man.* What yet?

*J. Night.* This witness on my finger, here, would stagger some folks; I am apt to think Miss Fairfax means to wear it in good time.

*Cha. Man.* A wedding ring! You must excuse me, Jack; I want credulity for that.

*J. Night.* Just as you please; I bought it for her wearing, and measured her finger for that purpose, and did intend, with the parson's help, to put it on with that design.

*Dib.* Will nothing stop your mouth? By Heavens, I'll throw the matter up!

[*Aside to* J. NIGHT.

*Cha. Man.* You! You marry Miss Letitia Fairfax!

*Dib.* Dear squire, be persuaded, and come away.

[*Aside to* J. NIGHT.

*J. Night.* Hold your tongue, I tell you; I, I, and not the ingenious, learned, travelled Mr Manlove; here's a witness that will vouch for what I say.—[DIB. *offers to go*]—Where are you running? Come back. Tell my brother what you know of Miss Fairfax's partiality for a certain insignificant, ignorant fellow, called Jack Nightshade.

*Dib.* For shame, sir! You should not talk of ladies' favours.

*Cha. Man.* Your friend is cautious, you perceive.

*J. Night.* Hang him, he's so by habit! he's a lawyer—but speak out: You are come to fetch me to Miss Fairfax, and Miss Fairfax is at your lodgings, and I am to be the lady's husband, and the bill is a true bill, is it not?

*Dib.* It is.

*Cha. Man.* Errors excepted; you forgot your caution. This can never be. Hark'e, sir; a little cross-examination, if you please.

*J. Night.* As much of that as you think proper. He's used to that sport; he'll dodge like a rabbit in a warren.

*Cha. Man.* You say the lady is at your lodgings: Answer me, what lady?

*Dib.* Sir, I believe—what lady? That's your question—what lady is at my lodgings?

*Cha. Man.* Ay, sir, without equivocation.

*Dib.* Well, sir, I am not upon oath in this business; nor am I obliged to ascertain the identity of people's persons; but the lady at my lodgings I take to be Miss Fairfax.

*J. Night.* Does that satisfy you? Brother, I thank you for your coat; it has made an impression, you perceive.

*Cha. Man.* Have a little patience—You take her to be Miss Fairfax? Describe her person.

*Dib.* I never meddled with her person, sir; that's not for me to do.

*Cha. Man.* Is she fair complexioned?

*Dib.* I think so.

*J. Night.* I can't say I do.

*Cha. Man.* Light hair, or dark?

*Dib.* My eyes are none of the best, but I think Miss Fairfax's hair is white.

*J. Night.* Black as a crow, by Jupiter!

*Cha. Man.* Tall, or short?

*Dib.* I never measured her; but I take her to be tall.

*J. Night.* Death and the devil! Why, you're drunk! Fair, tall, light-haired! Why, she is

little, dapper, dusky damsel, with a poll as black as———

*Cha. Man.* Hark'e, sir; a word in your ear. [*To* DIB.

*Dib.* Blown, as I hope to be a judge! [*Aside.*

*Cha. Man.* You have a sister answers this description; you're discovered, and a villain. [*Aside to* DIB.

*J. Night.* Hold, hold! no closeting of witnesses.

*Dib.* Good sir, be not offended. Mr Nightshade first borrowed your name, and my sister, to keep up the jest, made free with that of Miss Fairfax—nothing but a frolic.

*Cha. Man.* What do you tell me? Did my brother take my name in any interview with Miss Fairfax?

*Dib.* Certainly, sir; she calls him Mr Manlove at this moment.

*Cha. Man.* Away; your news has saved your ears; away!

*Dib.* 'Egad, we are all blown up! I must go and tell Lucy to make her peace. [*Exit* DIB.

*J. Night.* How now? what's this? Hallo! Where's Dibble running?

*Cha. Man.* Your humble servant, Mr Manlove—Take my name, my credit from me, Jack? It is too much. You must be saved, however.

*J. Night.* I must be satisfied. Is this fair dealing? Where is Dibble gone?

*Cha. Man.* Let him go where he will; he has made a fool of you.

*J. Night.* Yes; but I'm not a fool to take your word for that: so let me pass.

*Cha. Man.* Nay, Jack, but hear reason——

*J. Night.* Yes; and while you are reasoning, I shall lose the lady.

*Cha. Man.* I say the lady; have a care she does not prove the lady's maid.

*J. Night.* The maid! Ah, brother, I'm too cunning to take that upon trust. You have raised my curiosity, however, and I will know the truth——So let me go, for go I will, and that's enough. [*Exit* J. NIGHT.

*Cha. Man.* A match; we'll start together.—My happiness is sure as much concerned in this discovery, as yours. [*Exit.*

## SCENE II.—STAPLETON'S *house.*

*Enter* MR ANDREW NIGHTSHADE *and* MR MANLOVE.

*A. Night.* I should think, brother, there's no danger but a jury will see the action in this light.

*Man.* 'Tis hard to say; juries are ticklish things; the law will look to the motives. If it shall appear that it was done, not from the wickedness of the heart, but from the sudden heat of the passions, a jury will bring it in manslaughter.

*A. Night.* Well, and don't all the world know there's not a more passionate man living than myself?

*Man.* You have sometimes told me I was passionate; I never heard you say as much for yourself.

*A. Night.* But if there was no malice in the deed, how can it ever be deemed murder?

*Man.* Malice is threefold: first, malice express; secondly, malice implied; thirdly, malice prepense: of each in their order———

*A. Night.* Psha! prithee, what avails describing any, when I've none of all the three?

*Man.* Had you no quarrel, then, before the act?

*A. Night.* Quarrel! why no—or if I had, twas only a few words.

*Man.* Is that the cane you struck him with;

*A. Night.* This is the twig; I call it nothing more.

*Man.* I doubt the law will construe it a weapon of offence.

*A. Night.* And pray now was his not a weapon of offence? I believe the whole town thinks it such, of great offence: sick or well, there is no repose for those horns. What I did was in self-defence.

*Man.* I fear 'twill not be thought so. If indeed you had any wound to show, whereby the violence of the battery might be proved———

*A. Night.* Wound! why I have a wound and as bad a one as his; only mine lies within side of my head, and his without: he has broke the drum of my ears.

*Man.* What do you talk of ears? if you had been happy enough now to have lost a finger, an eye, or a fore-tooth, it would have been the loss of a defensive member, and a mayhem at common law.

*A. Night.* Well, brother, be so kind to tell me what I am to do.

*Man.* Repent.

*A. Night.* Why, so I will, provided you say nothing about the matter, and my country acquits me upon the trial; but if I am to be punished for my faults, what signifies repenting of them into the bargain?

*Man.* Well, Andrew, I must tell you there is yet a way of getting honourably out of this affair, provided you will bind yourself to me, never to lift your hand in wrath against a fellow-creature.

*A. Night.* Why, no, to be sure I shan't; I thought all skulls were as hard as Gregory's.

*Man.* Come, you must have done with Gregory's; nay, I would not alone exempt man from your fury, but beast likewise: Cruelty must not be practised in any shape: Nature must not be wounded in any of her works. Promise me this, upon the faith of an honest man, and I'll redeem you from this scrape.

*A. Night.* Look'e, brother, I am sensible of the folly of it; but as it's impossible to say where temptation may lead, there lies the fatal weapon; use it who will: I'll never take another stick in hand, till I'm obliged to go upon crutches. [*Throws down his cane.*

*Man.* Say you so? then I'll cure your broken head in an instant. Come with me, and you shall see what dispatch I can make upon occasion. [*Exeunt.*

SCENE III.—*The Painting room.*

LETITIA *is discovered painting*; LUCY *attending; a Layman placed at some distance.*

*Let.* These touches come off well; this last sitting was a good one: methinks I never was in better luck. Lucy, what say you; is it like?

*Lucy.* Like, madam! 'tis alive; 'tis Mr Stapleton himself.

*Let.* Is the servant gone for his clothes to dress the layman? I'll positively rub in the drapery now I'm about it. Well, child, I've turned this matter in my head, and I believe I must forgive you; there's no holding out against contrition: I believe your brother was to blame—So this painter then is Mr Manlove?

*Lucy.* Yes, madam, and a lovely man he is; if you please to remember, I told you so the first moment I saw him; so genteel, so well-bred, so perfectly the gentleman. Oh, here comes Thomas with the clothes—shall I help to put them on?

*Enter Servant.*

*Let.* So, so! that's right—let the arm fall naturally—it's very well as it is—Now turn the layman with its side to me—no, t'other way—a little more. Stay, let me do it myself. Now stand away——that's it.

*Ser.* Have you any further commands, madam?

*Let.* No—yes. If the young gentleman who was with me this morning should call again, shew him up hither.

*Ser.* The painter?

*Let.* Yes, the painter, as you call him.

*Ser.* Madam, he is this moment come into the court-yard.

*Let.* Indeed! then do as I bid you. [*Exit Ser.*] So, so, he has found out the mistake as well as myself.

*Lucy.* Pray, madam, give me leave to go and show Mr Manlove hither.

*Let.* Do so, Lucy, do so—What a flutter am I in?—but, hark'e, don't give him any intimation that I know him. [*Exit* LUCY.] This is happy! I am such a gainer by this revolution, that I cannot find in my heart to be angry with the girl—That ever I should be the bubble of so gross an imposition! Hark! he's coming. I'll pretend to be at work! though I am so confused, I don't know one colour from another. O Heavens, how charmingly he looks!

*Enter* CHARLES MANLOVE.

*Cha. Man.* I ask a thousand pardons: I intreat I mayn't disturb you.

*Let.* Oh, sir, don't mention it. You see I use no ceremony.

*Cha. Man.* You're infinitely obliging. I have ventured once again, Miss Fairfax, to intrude upon your patience.

*Let.* As often as you please; you're always welcome here. Come hither—I must have your judgment. How do you like what I have done?

*Cha. Man.* All that you do is well; but you'll forgive me—I am full of other thoughts, and wish to lose no moment of this happy opportunity.

*Let.* Pish! I must have you flatter me: Sit down—This drapery puzzles me—Sit down, I say: Your modern habits are so stiff! How shall I manage it? Come, take the chalk—nay, no excuse. Though you are so smartly dressed, you absolutely must assist me.

*Cha. Man.* I beg to be excused: my happiness is staked upon this crisis: my heart is full, and must have vent.

*Let.* How can you be so tiresome? Now you are going upon the old topic, Mr Manlove.

*Cha. Man.* I must confess it is of him that I would speak.

*Let.* Fye, fye upon you! call to mind your promise. Hold—suppose I throw aside this ugly brown and gold, and put him in a fancy dress: What say you?

*Cha. Man.* Nothing: for I am nothing: I have no art, no faculty of painting; I am an impostor. On my knees I do beseech you, forgive and hear me.

*Let.* Pray be composed, nor let your zeal for Mr Manlove agitate you thus. I'll save you all this trouble, by confessing freely to you, I have changed my mind since last we parted.

*Cha. Man.* Changed! as how?

*Let.* As you'll be pleased to hear. I think of Mr Manlove now as favourably as you yourself could wish.

*Cha. Man.* Madam——

*Let.* I think the woman must be blest, whom such a man shall honour with his choice.

*Cha. Man.* Indeed! I may presume, then, you would condescend to countenance his addresses?

*Let.* That's a home question; but I think it is not easy to deny him any thing.

*Cha. Man.* I'm thunderstruck! The boy has told me the truth; she likes him, and I am undone!

*Let.* What is the matter now? You seem quite disconcerted. Is not this the very point you aimed at? Hav'n't I confest all that you wished?

*Cha. Man.* Oh, no! You torture me.

*Let.* Man, restless man! whom nothing I can

do will satisfy: offended, when I refuse your friend; when I accept him, tortured!

*Cha. Man.* And tortured I must be: for know, most wretched as I am, it is not for a friend I plead, but for myself.

*Let.* Well, sir, I'm free to say, I still abide by my confession. What you tell me shakes not my esteem for Mr Manlove.

*Cha. Man.* Then I have lost you; for that Manlove is my younger brother, and has won you under a fictitious name: I, that really own it, am discarded.

*Let.* How purblind you long-sighted wits sometimes can be! You tell me you are Mr Manlove; have I revoked my opinion? You say your brother took your name; have I expressed myself in favour of Mr Nightshade?

*Cha. Man.* O, Heavens! I do begin to hope—

*Let.* You should not puzzle me with such cross purposes. Will you be Mr Manlove, and believe what I now say of him, or give that name to your brother, and hear me repeat what I lately said of him?

*Cha. Man.* Oh, let me be what you approve! I ask no higher blessing.

*Let.* We are interrupted. See, your formidable rival! Oh, you have made a fine confusion—Come away. [*Exeunt.*

*Enter* JACK NIGHTSHADE.

*J. Night.* Hist! hark'e, brother Charles!—He won't turn back, and I dare not follow him, for fear I run into old Crusty's jaws. I am fain to go as warily in this house as if I was riding over a warren. Didlikins! here comes the girl at last—Oh, fye upon you, miss! oh fye——

*Enter* LUCY *hastily.*

*Lucy.* Hush! hush! A truce to your reproaches—Hide yourself; your father's at my heels.

*J. Night.* My father! Drown it! what shall I do now?

*Lucy.* Here, get behind this layman; stoop: stand close. I'll put the shutters to; I owe you that good turn, at least, to bring you off. Stand close!

*Enter* ANDREW NIGHTSHADE.

*A. Night.* So, so! What's doing here? Darkness at mid-day! Your servant, Mr Stapleton—I see you notwithstanding; there you are: fine goings-on at your age! Smuggling your chambermaids in corners——Call you this fair trading? Oh, if your wife saw this!

*J. Night.* [*From behind.*] For pity's sake, keep him off! He's coming!

*Lucy.* Where are you coming, sir? Pray leave the room; your company disturbs him; don't you see how ill he is?

*A. Night.* Poor gentleman! and so you shut out the light to make him better? Ay, let him lean upon you, comfort him; I dare be sworn he has need of it——Shame upon you, Mr Stapleton! What, you'll not speak, not you! Here comes one will make you speak, and stir too, to some tune. Here, madam, here's your virtuous husband! here's a picture of modern conjugal fidelity!

*Enter* MRS STAPLETON.

*Mrs Stap.* A picture, truly! for I think you're talking to nothing else. Why don't the girl open the shutters? What do you stand there for? O, ho! [*Sees* JACK.

*Enter* MR STAPLETON *and* MANLOVE.

*Mr Stap.* What! my old friend conferring with the layman? Break his head, Andrew, if you please; no manslaughter can lie there.

[*The window is opened.*

*A. Night.* How's this! why, I protest I took it for yourself; and I was scandalized to see a sober citizen in such close conference with a damsel of so great temptations.

*Man.* Come, brother, you have had one warning against anger; let this be a memento to guard against suspicion.

*A. Night.* Brother, you know I can't endure advice; I see my error; that's enough.

*Mrs Stap.* Yes, but you don't see all: there's more behind the scenes; your greatest error, Mr Nightshade, is not yet found out.

*A. Night.* Why, what the vengeance have we here? Come out—let's see your face. Son Jack! Furies and flames! My boy, as I'm alive!

*Man.* This is judgment upon judgment!

*A. Night.* Which of you all have conjured up this plot? Oh, thou unutterably vile and sorry puppy! Hound, that I have bred to tear my heart out—Jack, Jack! for you to use me thus! You whom I've made my boast, the staff of my old age!—I would I had a staff! I'd beat your brains out with it, blockhead, so I would!

*Man.* Hold, hold! no more of that—remember promises.

*A. Night.* And in that jacket too! the substance of a farm laid out upon your back: sirrah, whence came that conjuror's coat, that scoundrel's livery! Answer me.

*J. Night.* Father, 'tis none of mine; 'tis brother Charles's.

*A. Night.* There, Mr Manlove! there's your pretty gentleman! a fine account! the corrupter of his brother!

*Stap.* Be more patient, friend Andrew.

*A. Night.* I won't be patient! I've a father's privilege to justify my passion. Hark'e, sir, what brought you up to town? Who seduced you hither? I suppose the fashionable scoundrel, who lent you that fool's coat.

*J. Night.* Lord love you, father! 'twas a frolic of my own; Charles would have had me travelled home again.

*Man.* What, is that like a seducer?

*J. Night.* And so I should afore now, but that I fell into a kind of love-suit here, with the young lady of this house.

*Mrs Stap.* What do you say? a love-suit?

*Stap.* With my ward, Miss Fairfax? impossible!

*Lucy.* Ay, now comes my examination: I had best escape. [*Aside.*

*J. Night.* Hold, hold; my whole defence turns upon your testimony—Stay where you are. [*To* LUCY.

*A. Night.* Ay, let us hear; there's something in this plea: Let us hear more of the love-suit.

*J. Night.* Nay, 'twas not much of a suit neither: it was very soon over; miss was coming, Dibble got a licence, and I bought a ring.

*Stap.* Why, you're beside yourself, young man!

*A. Night.* Go on! the boy speaks well, and shan't be brow-beat: hear him out.

*J. Night.* And so, as I was telling you, I should have married her outright, if brother Charles had not thrown a spoke in my wheel.

*A. Night.* See there, see there! What say you for your favourite now? Prove what you say, my lad, and I will do you justice to the extent of my estate.

*J. Night.* Say you so, father? then it shall out: why, brother Charles, you must know, had a month's mind for the lady himself; so he pretended to persuade me that I was made a fool of, and that the girl I was going to marry was not Miss Fairfax.

*A. Night.* There, there!—you hear it now from the tongue of truth and innocence: you're satisfied, I hope? I beg the lady may be sent for in.

*J. Night.* Sent for! a pretty joke! why, there she stands.

*Mr and Mrs Stap.* Ha, ha, ha!

*A. Night.* I'm thunderstruck!

*J. Night.* And so am I; for, if it had not been for brother Charles, as sure as you are here alive, we had both been happy before now.

*A. Night.* This, this the lady?

*J. Night.* Ay, father, that's she: I hope you like her?

*Stap.* Lucy! Lucy Dibble!

*Man.* The sister of my clerk!

*A. Night.* Death and the devil! a chambermaid!

*Mrs Stap.* Oh, you insidious hussy! what can you say for yourself?

*Lucy.* I am not here upon my trial, madam; that is past, and Miss Fairfax has signed my pardon. As for this gentleman, if I did put a little trick upon him under my mistress's name, he paid me in my own coin, by passing himself off under his brother's. The parties represented are not present; but, let me stand at Miss Fairfax's side, and place him by Mr Manlove, and I leave the world to decide which is the greatest impostor of the two.

*J. Night.* Oh, you abominable little vixen!

*Man.* Keep your peace, Jack! would you prove your valour on a woman?

*A. Night.* Then, by Jupiter, I'll break every bone in lawyer Dibble's skin, before this day's at an end!

*Stap.* Understand yourself, child; the daughter of a footman is no mate for the son of a gentleman.

*A. Night.* To be sure: well said, Master Stapleton!

*Lucy.* True, sir; but the footman bred his daughter as a gentleman should, and the gentleman gave his son the education of a footman. [*Exit* LUCY.

*Man.* Brother Andrew——

*A. Night.* Pooh!

*J. Night.* Father, that last wipe was at you.

*A. Night.* Hold your tongue, blockhead! get you home into the country, till the soil, and be a beast of burden; 'tis what nature meant you for.

*Man.* Nay, brother, blame not nature, she has done her part: 'tis you that should have tilled the soil. O Charles, you come upon a wish; your father is impatient to embrace you.

*Enter* CHARLES MANLOVE.

*Cha. Man.* Let but my father add his approbation, and my happiness shall be complete.

*Man.* He can't withhold it. Come, throw prejudice aside; let wrath and jealousy be cast far from you: look upon this youth; he is your son; you are the principal, but do you substitute the justice to confess my system has succeeded; it is possible, you see, to gain a knowledge of this world, and not be tainted with its wickedness.

*A. Night.* 'Tis mighty well; but for this cub of mine, I'll disinherit him to the devil; I could find in my heart to die to-morrow, for the pleasure of cutting him off with a shilling.

*J. Night.* Lord, father, in that case, a little matter would content me.

*Man.* Come, come, the law has made provision against that: Jack must inherit your estate, die when you will.

*A. Night.* Then, I'll not die at all; I'll live for ever on purpose to plague him; I'll starve the whelp; he shall have nothing to live upon, but rain-water and pig-nuts.

*Man.* Then, Andrew, I will keep him; he shall live with me.

*A. Night.* Say you so, brother? then, I'll forgive him, and keep him to myself; and, since you talk of knowledge of the world, I'll show him what it is: come hither, Jack; I'll go with him as far as there is water to carry us; I'll travel him to the world's end: Zounds! I'll take him out of it, rather than be outgone.

*J. Night.* Take the last stage by yourself, dear father! Farewell, uncle! good-bye, Charles!

[*Exeunt* A. *and* J. NIGHT.

*Man.* Incorrigible humourist! Come, my son, and come, my worthy friends: where is your amiable ward? I still have hopes this day of rancour and confusion will conclude with joy.

*Stap.* And so it shall, if my persuasion can have weight.

*Mrs Stap.* Persuasion never fails, when inclination aids it. Look, she comes!

*Cha. Man.* And comes like Hope, like spring and sunshine to the longing year, with smiles of soft complacency and love.

*Enter* LETITIA.

*Let.* Ay, now your rival's gone, you think the field your own; but every hour will raise fresh rivals, for every hour will draw forth fresh perfections from a character like your's, and each demand the preference in our admiration and applause.

*Stap.* Well said, my girl! then there's a bargain made: What need of further words?

*Mrs Stap.* Fy upon you, Mr Stapleton! you distress her; you are too much in haste about these matters.

*Mr Stap.* Why, Dolly, you and I concluded our matter within the week.

*Mrs Stap.* Longer; 'twas longer: don't believe him, Letitia.

*Let.* Excuse me. I can readily believe, that hearts so fitted for each other, might unite at once by mutual attraction.

*Man.* Dost thou believe it, fair one? then, away with all delay! not even the law, its own parent, shall be privileged in this case; we'll work like shipwrights at an armament, and Dibble, as a punishment for his intrigues, shall labour double tides. If marriage ever shall regain its dignity in this degenerate age, it must be by the union of such hearts as these.

[*Exeunt omnes.*

END OF VOLUME SECOND.

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